

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF THE COMING OUT PROCESS

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ABSTRACT. Five developmental stages which describe the patterns seen in individuals with predominantly same-sex sexual orientation are described in the paper. The stages are: pre-coming out, coming out, exploration, first relationships, and identity integration.

The illness model of homosexuality has been seriously challenged by numerous researchers who have concluded there is no psychopathology inherent in homosexuality per se. (For a detailed review of this literature, see Gonsiorek, 1977.) Indeed, outcome studies of treatment based upon the illness model have indicated limited results when "heterosexual shift" was the goal (Coleman, 1978). As a result, there has been a significant change in the understanding and treatment of homosexual clients. New models postulate that homosexuality is not a definable entity but, rather, a normal variation of sexual behavior, erotic disposition, and sexual preference expressed in varying degrees and manners by different individuals (e.g., Bell & Weinberg, 1978).

The new models postulate that individuals who are homosexual to varying degrees and in various ways share similar stages of identity development (Cass, 1979; Dank, 1971; Hencken & O'Dowd, 1977; Lee, 1977; Plummer, 1975; Grace, Note 1). These models are based on developmental concepts similar to those outlined by Erikson (1956) and Sullivan (1953). Like Erikson, theorists have been suggesting that each stage of development must be resolved before subsequent stages can be completed. It is argued that the adjustment and socialization of the individual is greatly influenced by social forces (Erikson, 1956) and, most importantly, that the self develops and is shaped according to the nature of interpersonal relationships (Sullivan, 1953). These developmental concepts have in turn produced new treatment models.

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appears about to break with these expectations. Minimally, the child feels "different," alienated, and alone. As they grow up, many such children develop low self-esteem. If acknowledged, same-sex feelings would mean rejection and ridicule; consequently, individuals protect themselves from awareness through defenses, such as denial, repression, reaction formation, sublimation, and rationalization. These defenses keep the individuals, their families, and society from experiencing the crisis that would occur if the issue of homosexuality were confronted directly. The consequences of this concealment can be enormously destructive. As Fischer (1972) states:

Every time a homosexual denied the validity of his feelings or restrains himself from expressing, he does a small hurt to himself. He turns his energies inward and suppresses his own vitality. The effect may be scarcely noticeable: joy may be a little less keen, happiness slightly subdued; he may simply feel a little run down, a little less tall. Over the years, these tiny denials have a cumulative effect. (p. 249).

Because individuals at the pre-coming out stage are not consciously aware of same-sex feelings, they cannot describe what is wrong. They can only communicate their conflict through behavioral problems, psychosomatic illnesses, suicidal attempts, or various other symptoms. It is conceivable that some suicidal attempts by children and adolescents are due to this conflict.

The conflict of this stage can be resolved in several ways. Some individuals decide to commit suicide and are successful. Others hide their sexual feelings from themselves and others, continuing to suffer from lowered self-esteem and repression. A healthy resolution to this stage is to face the existential crisis of being different. This means breaking through defense barriers and acknowledging same-sex feelings.

Coming Out

Individuals move into this stage when they acknowledge their homosexual feelings. This is the first developmental task of the coming out stage. At first, it may mean simply acknowledging a thought, a fantasy. Plummer (1975) and Lee (1977) call this stage *signification* and Plummer refers to "those first conscious and semi-conscious moments in which an individual comes to perceive himself as a homosexual" (p. 135). Hencken and O'Dowd (1977) call this stage *awareness*, Dank (1971) *identification*, and Grace (Note 1) *acknowledgement*. This is not to imply that the individual necessarily has a clear understanding of the word "homosexual" and what it means. As Cass (1979) describes, this stage is filled with confusion: Indeed, she refers to it as the stage of *identity confusion*.

Research has indicated the average age at which individuals experience this

awareness as between 13 and 18. Jay and Young (1979) report that the median age of awareness for the females in their sample was 18; the median age for males was 13-14. The ranges were wide, however, and many individuals in Jay and Young's sample did not realize these feelings until they were beyond chronological adolescence. A study by Kooden, Morin, Riddle, Rogers, Sang, and Strassburger (Note 2) reports that in a sample of gay male and lesbian psychologists, the average age at which males become aware of their homosexual feelings was 12.8; for females it was 13.8. On the average, the males understood the word "homosexual" at 17.2 years and females at 15.6 years. In other words, there is usually a period of time during which individuals are aware of homosexual feelings (whether they have acted upon them or not) but do not label them as such. Consequently, they cannot verbalize these feelings to a therapist. If the therapist initiates a discussion of homosexual feelings with clients, these confusing feelings can be recognized more quickly and identity confusion can be resolved sooner.

Once their same-sex feelings have been identified and acknowledged, individuals face the next developmental task of the coming out stage: telling others. The function of this task is to begin self-acceptance. (The process of disclosure does not necessarily mean public disclosure; self-recognition and the ability to share this fact with someone else are more important; Weinberg & Williams, 1974.) Recognizing the need for external validation, individuals risk disclosure to others in hopes that they will not be rejected. This is a very critical point for the confidants' reaction can have a powerful impact. If negative, it can confirm all the old negative impressions and can put a seal on a previous low self-concept. If positive, the reaction can start to counteract some of the old perceived negative feelings, permitting individuals to begin to accept their sexual feelings and increase their self-esteem. The existential crisis begins to resolve in a positive direction.

Research has indicated that commitment to a positive homosexual identity is related to healthy psychological adjustment (Hammersmith & Weinberg, 1973). In addition, Dank (1973) found that the frequency of feelings of guilt and loneliness, as well as the felt need for psychiatric or psychological consultations, decreased as the individual spent more time with their homosexual identity. But no one can develop self-concepts such as "accepted," "valued," or "worthwhile" all alone. One must take risks to gain acceptance from others. Therapists can be helpful in discussing with their clients situations and experiences that involve risk-taking but might lead to improved self-concepts. Because of the vulnerability of the self-concept during the coming out stage, it is important that clients choose carefully those people to whom they disclose their homosexual identity. Although there is never complete certainty, individuals can often predict how friends, work associates, and family members will respond. It is important that these first persons be people who will accept the client's homosexuality. Once an individual gains acceptance from a number

of persons, it is much easier to tell by society.

The perceived status of the person of self-concept change in the individual friend will obviously mean more to avoid telling their close (presumably) friends solely in other individuals who missed opportunity. Since an individual's reality are mostly negative, the perceived value is usually not very high, and acceptance value. Individuals with same-sex perceptions coming out to predominantly heterosexual people to be accepting.

Just as during the pre-coming out stage, negatively to the prospect of being out when a parent or family member reacts negatively. Once a parent or family member reacts negatively, the parent or family member (brother, sister, husband, etc.) take a long time before they can accept. For many homosexual people today, the parental or family response is minimal. But each situation should be evaluated, and family members is most successful already built up enough positive self-concept to withstand a negative response. If they are with their parents and family, they will often grieve the loss of the family and having children. Homosexuals, remembering that although it took time to accept sexual selves, that possibility exist today. More and more people today, brothers, daughters, sisters, wives, etc., however, are probably still the ex-

Exploration

This is the stage of experimentation. Hays and Lee, 1977, call this stage a period of exploring and experimenting with sexual and social activity with others who are open and honest about their own positive self-image. Cass (1979) calls this stage "exploration," which then leads to integration.

of persons, it is much easier to withstand rejection, or even indirect rejection by society.

The perceived status of the person disclosed to greatly affects the possibility of self-concept change in the individual. For example, acceptance from a close friend will obviously mean more than a stranger's acceptance. Some people avoid telling their close (presumably heterosexual) friends and look for acceptance solely in other individuals who identify as gay or lesbian. This can be a missed opportunity. Since an individual's original conceptions of homosexuality are mostly negative, the perceived status of other homosexual people is usually not very high, and acceptance from them can have limited impact or value. Individuals with same-sex preferences can possibly benefit more from coming out to predominantly heterosexual significant others—if these are likely to be accepting.

Just as during the pre-coming out stage an individual may have reacted negatively to the prospect of being homosexual, it should not be surprising when a parent or family member to whom the individual discloses responds negatively. Once a parent or family member is made aware that their son, daughter, brother, sister, husband, or wife has homosexual feelings, it may take a long time before they can acknowledge, let alone accept, this fact. For many homosexual people today, the chances of an immediate positive parental or family response is minimal. This does not mean that they cannot be told, but each situation should be examined separately. Usually, telling parents and family members is most successful once homosexual individuals have already built up enough positive responses from significant others to be able to withstand a negative response from home. It is important that they persevere with their parents and family members through a grieving process. Parents will often grieve the loss of the image of their son or daughter as married and having children. Homosexual individuals should find encouragement in remembering that although it took them a long time fully to accept their homosexual selves, that possibility exists for their parents and other family members, too. More and more people today are able to support their homosexual sons, brothers, daughters, sisters, wives, and husbands. Full support and acceptance, however, are probably still the exception rather than the norm.

Exploration

This is the stage of experimenting with a new sexual identity. (Plummer, 1975, and Lee, 1977, call this stage *coming out*.) This is akin to the adolescent period of exploring and experimenting and is the first major experience of sexual and social activity with others. The opportunity to interact with others who are open and honest about their sexuality furthers the development of a positive self-image. Cass (1979) sees this process as first experiencing *identity tolerance*, which then leads to *identity acceptance*. Grace (Note 1) refers to

crashing out, a vivid description of the awkwardness and intensity of this stage.

During exploration, individuals face several developmental tasks. The first is to develop interpersonal skills in order to meet and socialize with others with similar sexual interests. Having been socialized as heterosexual, individuals with homosexual preferences may lack the skills necessary to developing same-sex relationships.

Secondly, some individuals need to develop a sense of personal attractiveness and sexual competence. By becoming involved in sexual relationships that allow them to feel attractive to members of their own sex, they can develop a sense of mastery and competence with regard to being sexual with others. As clients begin sexual relationships, it can be helpful for the therapist to provide human sexuality education, and especially information on sexually transmitted diseases. Two resources may be useful to the therapist: *The Advocate Guide to Gay Health*, by Fenwick (1978); and *The Gay Health Guide*, by Rowan and Gillette (1978). (See Gonsiorek, 1980, for further discussion of health care issues.)

Thirdly, it is helpful to some individuals to recognize that their self-esteem is not based upon sexual conquest. Some people get locked into only seeing themselves in a sexual way. Consequently, society and the individuals themselves have difficulty understanding social and sexual exploration within a developmental framework and tend to view this behavior as immature, immoral, and merely promiscuous. The exploration stage can be better understood if it is recognized that individuals with same-sex preferences are usually not afforded an adolescence during their teenage years. Grace (Note 3) has suggested the concept of *developmental lag*, or the loss of chronological adolescence. Because most people in our society are encouraged to follow a heterosexual adolescence, homosexual individuals oftentimes do not enter their true adolescence until their chronological adolescence has long past. This can be very puzzling and frightening for men and women who have matured in other ways, e.g., intellectually, vocationally, and financially (Grace, Note 1).

Unfortunately, although researchers have documented the ages at which individuals pass through the stages of coming out, they have not always differentiated clearly between first same-sex experiences and those which are definitely understood to be homosexual. Kooden et al. (Note 2) did make the distinction. They found that first same-sex experiences for men occurred at age 15 and for women at age 20; however, males did not consider themselves to be homosexual until age 21 and the females until age 23. McDonald (Note 2) found similar results in his male sample: First same-sex experiences occurred at the average age of 15, and self-labeling at 19. While adolescent same-sex experiences are common (whether the adolescent later identifies as heterosexual or homosexual), these early sexual experiences are not clearly understood to be acts of homosexual expression. After self-labeling as homosexual, however, the meaning of these experiences is quite different.

The amount of sexual experimentation varies among males. For example, Nuehring, Fein, and male college students engaged in more sexual female college students. It appears that male culture has led to greater sexual exploration than females. With changing sex-role stereotypes, more permission for females to engage in sexual exploration.

Grace (Note 3) urges therapists to help clients take an important step in the clients' growth by encouraging them in the exploration stage of coming out: meet others with similar feelings and identity, and to act on those feelings. Many individuals have received encouragement from others before coming out, which could have been avoided. Therapists can help clients explore emotions and to channel their feelings into positive actions. Therapists might have the client carefully consider the developmental tasks of this stage.

Many individuals lose sight of their goals. Adolescents are known to act out, rebel, and engage in destructive behavior. Society accepts the behavior of chronological adolescents, but beyond that, it is harmful. While many individuals with same-sex preferences are victimized by societal views of homosexual behavior, the process of victimization themselves. Recognition of these obstacles can prompt them to take more responsibility for their lives. That the obstacles to successful identity are not simply feeling sorry for themselves or being bisexual or homosexual persons. Conceptions of themselves, never get better. It can be helpful for the therapist to challenge the client's ability on them to overcome these barriers.

One common stumbling block to coming out successfully is the use of intoxicants to shore up a weak self-concept. For many, socializing presents no problem. Others have the pressures of this stage and to deal with them since childhood. Drugs can become associated with problems in the development of identity. If abused chronically, individuals can experience problems. Studies by Fifield, Latham, and Phillis (Note 4), Coyne, and Spare (Note 6) conclude that individuals in the homosexual community have or will have

The amount of sexual experimentation may differ between females and males. For example, Nuehring, Fein, and Tyler (1974) found that homosexual male college students engaged in more one-time sexual contact than homosexual female college students. It appears that sex-role identification in our culture has led to greater sexual exploration and experimentation among males than females. With changing sex-role stereotypes, however, there may now be more permission for females to engage in exploratory sexual behavior.

Grace (Note 3) urges therapists to help clients reconstruct their behavior as an important step in the clients' growth and development. Some individuals in the exploration stage of coming out may benefit from permission to explore and experiment with their sexual identity. They may need encouragement to meet others with similar feelings and interests, to feel physical attractions, and to act on those feelings. Many individuals feel sad that they have not received encouragement from others before, and anger that much of their suffering could have been avoided. Therapists can help clients to ventilate these emotions and to channel their feelings in constructive ways. The therapist might have the client carefully consider the methods for completing the developmental tasks of this stage.

Many individuals lose sight of their goals while in this adolescent adventure. Adolescents are known to act out, rebel, and act in a self-destructive manner; adolescents whose self-esteem is low have a greater tendency to engage in self-destructive behavior. Society accepts certain amounts of this behavior from chronological adolescents, but beyond certain limits these actions can be truly harmful. While many individuals with same-sex feelings may have been victimized by societal views of homosexuality, they can come to perpetuate that process of victimization themselves. Recognizing their behavior as self-abuse can prompt them to take more responsibility for their own actions. Many learn that the obstacles to successful identity adjustment lie within them, rather than in simply feeling sorry for themselves or in blaming others. The reality is that many bisexual or homosexual persons, because they never develop positive conceptions of themselves, never get beyond these barriers. Sometimes it can be helpful for the therapist to challenge such clients and put the responsibility on them to overcome these barriers.

One common stumbling block to completing the tasks of the exploration stage successfully is the use of intoxicating agents to anesthetize pain or to shore up a weak self-concept. For many, the use of alcohol and other drugs in socializing presents no problem. Others use drugs to cope with the existing pressures of this stage and to deal with the chronic emotional pain experienced since childhood. Drugs can become associated with sexual expression, leading to problems in the development of intimacy. If alcohol or other drugs are abused chronically, individuals can experience further developmental problems. Studies by Fifield, Latham, and Phillips (Note 5) and Lohrenz, Connelly, Coyne, and Spare (Note 6) conclude that at least 3 out of 10 members of the homosexual community have or will have serious problems with alcohol. These

estimates are considerably higher than estimates for the general population. Therapists need to be keenly aware of this problem and look for signs of abuse.

Sexual activity can also be a "fix," a way to bolster a damaged self-concept and temporarily feel good about oneself. Although in many ways sex can be a healthy method of building self-esteem, if it is used compulsively this can interfere with the development of an integrated self-concept. Therapists should be aware of the many different ways that sex is used by men and women.

Grace (Note 1) suggests some other areas to investigate with the client who is at the exploration stage. These include experiences of physical and sexual assault, sexual dysfunction, how well the client can identify and meet her or his social and sexual needs with others, and how well the client can place sexual intimacy in perspective with other needs, such as for affection and support.

First Relationships

After a period of sexual and social experimentation, exploration can lose its intrigue, and needs for intimacy often become more important. The individual may yearn for a more stable, committed relationship and explore relationships that combine emotional and physical attraction.

The developmental task of this stage, then, is to learn how to function in a same-sex relationship, especially in a society where the norm is opposite-sex relationships. First relationships can be disastrous for many reasons. For one thing, there is a self-fulfilling prophecy: Individuals may not believe that a relationship can work. Lingering negative attitudes about homosexuality can sabotage efforts to establish or maintain a relationship. One stereotyped notion of a gay or lesbian relationship is that it is fraught with rejection and hurt, and never lasts long anyway.

First relationships are also characterized by intensity, possessiveness, and lack of trust. The intense need for intimacy can easily create desperation: As one client stated: "I don't care what it takes, I am going to make it work and last forever." This client, as do others, expects perfection and has expectations beyond what any other individual can provide. With these kinds of expectation it does not take much to dim hopes and dreams. One or both partners usually begin to feel cramped and confined in trying to live up to all the ideals. If they attempt to assert independence, this will be interpreted as a loss of love. In addition, these pressures and expectations can cause a loss of sexual interest, further "proof" of a failing love. A common result is increased interest in sexual activity outside the relationship. This interest then becomes the final proof of lack of love and the relationship ends. First relationships can end on a very turbulent note, sometimes causing one or both partners to return to the exploration stage, convinced that long-term relationships never

develop. Some never try to develop and with each relationship learn more.

Homosexual people are at a disadvantage. There are very few role models to follow. They are depicted in books, films, and television as lacking support for these relationships. Many lack the encouragement and support of their friends and family. They are driving couples apart rather than together. They are learning how to communicate and how to get along.

One of the most common pitfalls is a solidated self-identity. Relationship exploration and exploration are completed. They are effective if they help the partners to move forward to be completed. Being in a relationship is a challenge to self-identity. After all, if one is in a closeted homosexual identity from friends, family, and society, it has not worked through her or his relationship can be very difficult. This pressure.

Integration

Finally, there is the stage of integration. Individuals in this stage have moved beyond exploration, comparison, tolerance, acceptance, and individuals incorporate their public and private selves.

Grace (Note 1) calls this stage solidation, an open-ended, an ongoing process of the person's life. New feelings and concepts will be discovered, explored, and new relationships are formed. She points out that individuals attend to situations demand: for example, retreat after a relationship has ended. Her or his homosexuality with a family.

Relationships in this stage, because of possessiveness, mutual trust, and commitment. Individuals are better equipped to handle sometimes inevitable terminations from a perspective and handled with more psychological crippling events.

Individuals choose not to be in long-time commitment.

Individuals in this stage continue to develop.

develop. Some never try to develop a relationship again. Others keep trying and with each relationship learn more of the skills needed.

Homosexual people are at a distinct disadvantage in learning these skills. There are very few role models to emulate; very few gay couples, for example, are depicted in books, films, or television. There is also a lack of public support for these relationships. Many couples do not have the acknowledgment and support of their friends and community. There are many more forces driving couples apart than together. Therapists can help by teaching couples how to communicate and how to get needed support.

One of the most common pitfalls of first relationships is the lack of consolidated self-identity. Relationships often begin before basic tasks of coming out and exploration are completed. In working with couples, therapists can be effective if they help the partners examine developmental needs and tasks still to be completed. Being in a relationship may put a strain on any individual's identity. After all, if one is in a couple, it is more difficult to conceal one's homosexual identity from friends, family, and society. If either of the partners has not worked through her or his coming-out issues successfully, being in a relationship can be very difficult. Some relationships end in order to relieve this pressure.

Integration

Finally, there is the stage of integration. To use Cass's (1979) terminology, individuals in this stage have moved from *identity confusion* through *identity comparison*, *tolerance*, *acceptance*, and *pride*, to *identity synthesis*. Here individuals incorporate their public and private identities into one self-image.

Grace (Note 1) calls this stage *self-definition* and *reintegration*. He describes it as open-ended, an ongoing process of development that will last for the rest of the person's life. New feelings about self will continue to emerge, new labels and concepts will be discovered, new social networks will be identified and explored, and new relationships and intimacies will be enjoyed. Grace also points out that individuals attend to different tasks of different stages as life situations demand: for example, returning to the stage of exploration and experimentation after a relationship has ended, or going back to coming out to share or his homosexuality with a family member, employer, colleague, or friend. Relationships in this stage, because they are often characterized by non-possessiveness, mutual trust, and freedom, can be more successful than first relationships. Individuals are better prepared psychologically for the natural and sometimes inevitable terminations of relationships. Terminations are seen in perspective and handled with normal grief reactions, rather than becoming psychologically crippling events. Many individuals in the integration stage choose not to be in long-time committed relationships.

Individuals in this stage continue to face other developmental tasks and

phases of adulthood, such as midlife and old age. It is reasonable to assume that an individual with an integrated identity would have a better chance of handling these stages than individuals who are still working on earlier tasks of identity development.

Discussion

Although these stages fit into a linear progressive model of identity formation, it should not be assumed that the model fits reality exactly. As stated previously, McDonald (Note 4) found in his research that many individuals do not follow a predictable pattern, executing each stage in sequence. He concluded, "Although there appears to be an orderly developmental sequence that underlines the coming out process, vis-à-vis identity formation, not all gay persons move predictably from awareness of same-sex feelings through behavioral and eventual identity" (p. 11). The model described here, therefore, gives the therapist some understanding of the process of integrated identity formation—and nothing more.

This model also oversimplifies issues related to sexual orientation per se. For one thing, many individuals are not exclusively heterosexual or homosexual. Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin (1948) found that sexual orientation is best described on a continuum. Sexual orientation can be described even better on continua of behavior, fantasy, and emotional attachments (Coleman, Note 7). Individuals with varying amounts of same-sex feelings, fantasies, and sexual behavior still seem to fit into this model. Secondly, Bell and Weinberg (1978) have identified many types of homosexual expression and life-style. (The developmental model described here might explain how an individual gets from one Bell and Weinberg category to another.) Thirdly, people are probably neither static nor easily classified by a Kinsey number, a Bell and Weinberg category, or one of the stages outlined in this paper. All of these classifications systems, however, are useful in approaching the complexity of sexual orientation, life-style, and psychological maturity.

There is a danger in any model that oversimplifies the developmental tasks that must be completed to assure an integrated identity. Rigid rules of conformity are sometimes dictated by the gay community, and these can be harmful to the many men and women who do not comply (De Cecco, Note 8). By the same token, therapists can develop their own rigid rules and give them as prescriptions to their clients. By appreciating the complexity and diversity of homosexual individuals and homosexual expression, therapists can avoid this trap.

This model does not presume that all individuals develop an integrated identity. Many never reach this stage. In McDonald's male sample, 15% stated they do not consider themselves to have a positive identity. These men had negative attitudes about homosexuality, participated infrequently in the gay

subculture, did not disclose their guilt, anxious, and ashamed. In a sample of gay psychologists, 8% of them had not achieved a positive identity (as did the majority of M sample) but certainly not a positive identity in the homosexual population. Presumably, completing the questionnaire already developed some positive pre-coming out stage, for example, searchers. There is no research on individuals with same-sex preferences stuck developmentally along the stage. Nor is there very good representation of the first researchers. Their studies suggest that 10 and 14 years after the first time people move through these stages, people become stuck and never progress. As to why a person moves from one stage to another, Bell and Weinberg (1978) believe the changes are caused by actions elicit certain societal responses. Their evaluation affects their

The importance of societal attitudes has been stressed by Humphreys and Minton (Note 9). As Minton's liberation movement over the past 20 years has brought about a positive homosexual identity support system than previously existed in contemporary America are actually developing an integrated and positive identity. The fact that American society is gradually changing new societal attitudes allow for dignified ways. In the 1940s and 1950s, to seedy bars, dirty steam baths, and many social, political, and religious behavior. New laws prohibit discrimination in the American Psychiatric and Psychological Association's view of homosexuality as an illness per se. Such prohibiting discrimination in the workplace. This is not to say that such practices do not persist. They do, and coming out problematic. There

subculture, did not disclose their affectional/sexual identity to others, and felt guilty, anxious, and ashamed about being homosexual. In Kooden et al.'s sample of gay psychologists, 8% of the females and 12% of the males stated they had not achieved a positive homosexual identity. The vast majority of this sample (as did the majority of McDonald's sample) reported having acquired a positive identity, but certainly neither sample is representative of the general homosexual population. Presumably, most respondents who would even consider completing the questionnaires used by these researchers, would have already developed some positive conceptions of themselves. Individuals in a pre-coming out stage, for example, would not have been visible to these researchers. There is no research that gives an idea of the number of individuals with same-sex preferences who are, or will remain, in a pre-coming out stage. Nor is there very good research on what percentage of individuals get stuck developmentally along the way. Studies by Kooden et al. and McDonald represent some of the first research that even attempts to answer these questions. Their studies suggest that developing an integrated identity takes between 10 and 14 years after the first awareness of same-sex feelings, and that some people move through these stages more rapidly than others whereas other people become stuck and never progress, or progress very slowly. Little is known as to why a person moves from stage to stage. De Montefiores and Schultz (1978) believe the changes are caused by "feedback loop." That is, a person's actions elicit certain societal responses, which the person then evaluates; in turn, their evaluation affects their decision on how to behave in the future.

The importance of societal attitudes in affecting positive identity development has been stressed by Humphreys (1979), Plummer (1975), Smith (1980), and Minton (Note 9). As Minton states: "Indeed it would seem that the gay liberation movement over the past decade has facilitated the process of acquiring a positive homosexual identity by providing more in the way of social support system than previously existed" (p. 12). Increasingly, men and women in contemporary America are acknowledging their homosexual feelings and developing an integrated and positive identity. This may be explained by the fact that American society is gradually changing its views of homosexuality; new societal attitudes allow for homosexual expression in more open and dignified ways. In the 1940s and 1950s, public homosexuality was relegated to seedy bars, dirty steam baths, and restrooms in bus stations. Today, there are many social, political, and religious organizations that legitimize same-sex behavior. New laws prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. The American Psychiatric and Psychological Associations no longer view homosexuality as an illness per se. Several corporations have personnel policies prohibiting discrimination in the hiring or firing of gay male or lesbian employees. This is not to say that anti-homosexual prejudice or discriminatory practices do not persist. They do, and they continue to make self-acceptance and coming out problematic. There are many casualties of these attitudes.

For the therapist to be accepting of homosexuality, therefore, and acquainted with the developmental concepts outlined in this paper, can be of great help to the client when the goals of therapy are to assist homosexual individuals to recognize and accept their sexual identity, improve interpersonal and social functioning, and value and integrate this identity while living in a predominantly heterosexual society.

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5. The RITE OF LAYING ON OF HANDS or prayer for the healing of the sick in mind, body or spirit is to be conducted by the ministers of the Church, at their discretion, upon request.

6. The RITE OF BLESSING may be conducted by the ministers of the Church for persons, things and relationships, when deemed appropriate by the minister. This includes the dedication of a church building to the glory of God.

ARTICLE IV MINISTRY

The UFMCC affirms the universal priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5-10). All members of the Church are called by God to a ministry of the Gospel of Christ in the Church and in the world.

UFMCC decrees that all people shall have equality of access and opportunity which is free from discrimination on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, race, age, physical challenge, HIV status, health status, gender identification, nationality, or economic status in terms of:

- 1] Employment and personnel procedures
- 2] Service delivery -- all that we do.

A. MINISTRY OF THE LAITY

1. The Priesthood of All Believers: Laypeople are the People of God, called by God and authorized by Scripture to respond to the Word, serving as Christ served, to the end that the Church may be edified and the world transformed. UFMCC affirms that this is the ministry of every layperson in this Fellowship.

2. DEACONS: As outlined in the New Testament, their office is an historic ministry of service and aid within the Christian Church.

(a) RESPONSIBILITIES: In accordance with the spiritual responsibilities of the office, deacons minister to those in need, the sick, the friendless, and those persons who may be in distress. Deacons serve, and may administer the Rites and Sacraments, under the authorization and direction of their appointing authority. Except in extraordinary circumstances, deacons shall not serve on local church Boards of Directors/local church administrative bodies.

(b) QUALIFICATIONS: Deacons shall be members in good standing of a local church body and be persons of spiritual mind, exemplary lives, joyful outlook, sound judgement, and of proven dedicated service.

(c) APPOINTMENTS:

1. All persons appointed deacons by the Pastors of Chartered Churches are subject to approval by the local Board of Directors/local church administrative body.

2. All persons appointed deacons in Commissioned Churches by the Pastor or pastoral leader are subject to approval both by the District Coordinator/Coordinator of Church Extension and by the Board of Directors/local church administrative body.

3. The term of office for deacons shall be for three (3) years. Persons may be reappointed at the end of any term.

(d) TRAINING: Training before and after the appointment of deacons is the responsibility of the appointing authority and may be delegated.

(e) DISCIPLINE: A deacon may be disciplined for disloyalty or unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty. For cause, the appointing authority may suspend a deacon from the exercise of a deacon's duties for a period of not more than thirty (30) days, and must report that suspension and the reasons for it to the approving authority/authorities.

1. In Chartered Churches, the Pastor, together with a majority vote of the full Board of Directors/local church administrative body, may for cause remove a deacon from office or impose lesser discipline.

2. In Commissioned Churches, the Pastor/pastoral leader, together with the approval of the majority of the full Board of Directors, and with the approval of the District Coordinator/Coordinator of Church Extension, may for cause remove a deacon from office or impose lesser discipline.

(f) DISTRICT WORKS: If the need arises, the District Coordinator/Coordinator of Church Extension, may request a deacon to serve for district work. This request is subject to approval of the appointing authority and District Committee/Board of World Church Extension.

B. MINISTRY OF THE CLERGY:

1. CLERGY: Clergy are members of the People of God, called by God authorized and legally recognized by this Fellowship to serve among the people as professional ministers of the Word and Sacraments.

THE PLASTER SAINT

A very wise piece of advice, which St. Benedict gives to monks in his Rule, is that they should not desire to be called saints before they are holy, but that they should first become saints in order that their reputation for holiness may be based on reality. This brings out the great difference between real spiritual perfection and man's idea of perfection. Or perhaps one might say, more accurately, the difference between sanctity and narcissism.

The popular idea of a "saint" is, of course, quite naturally based on the sanctity which is presented for our veneration, in heroic men and women, by the Church. There is nothing surprising in the fact that the saints quickly become stereotyped in the mind of the average Christian, and everyone, on reflection, will easily admit that the stereotype tends to be unreal. The conventions of hagiography have usually accentuated the unreality of the picture, and pious art has, in most cases, successfully completed the work. In this way, the Christian who devotes himself to the pursuit of holiness unconsciously tends to reproduce in himself some features of the popular stereotyped image. Or rather, since it is fortunately difficult to succeed in this enterprise, he imagines himself in some sense obliged to follow the pattern, as if it were really a model proposed for his imitation by the Church herself, instead of a purely conventional and popular caricature of a mysterious reality—the Christlikeness of the saints.

The stereotyped image is easy to sketch out here: it is essentially an image without the slightest moral flaw. The

saint, if he ever sinned at all, eventually became impeccable after a perfect conversion. Impeccability not being quite enough, he is raised beyond the faintest possibility of feeling temptation. Of course he is tempted, but temptation provides no difficulties. He always has the absolute and heroic answer. He flings himself into fire, ice water or briars rather than even face a remote occasion of sin. His intentions are always the noblest. His words are always the most edifying clichés, fitting the situation with a devastating obviousness that silences even the thought of dialogue. Indeed, the "perfect" in this fearsome sense are elevated above the necessity or even the capacity for a fully human dialogue with their fellow men. They are without humor as they are without wonder, without feeling and without interest in the common affairs of mankind. Yet of course they always rush to the scene with the precise act of virtue called for by every situation. They are always there kissing the leper's sores at the very moment when the king and his noble attendants come around the corner and stop in their tracks, mute in admiration.

There is no one who will not smile at the naïve beginner who trustingly embarks upon the reproduction of this kind of image in his life. He will always be told to face reality; yet when he is reminded of the sorry facts of life, do we not often assume, secretly, that he is, after all, right? Sanctity is indeed a cult of the *absolute*. It is intransigent, and does not even consider compromise. Do we not really, in our hearts, mean by this that the miracle of sanctity is somehow not only supernatural but even inhuman? Do we not, as a matter of fact, equate the supernatural with a flat denial of the human? Are not nature and grace diametrically opposed? Does not sanctity mean the absolute rejection and renunciation of all that accords with nature?

If we think this, we are in practice admitting the reality of the stereotyped image, and in that case we have no

alternative than to assume that this is the model that is supposed to be realized by the perfect Christian. By what right, then, do we dissuade people from seeking to realize what is in all truth their model?

The fact is that our concept of sanctity is ambiguous and obscure, and this is perhaps because our concept of grace and the supernatural is itself confused. The adage that grace "builds on nature" is by no means a cliché that was devised to excuse half measures in the spiritual life. It is the strict truth, and until we realize that before a man can become a saint he must first of all be a *man* in all the humanity and fragility of man's actual condition, we will never be able to understand the meaning of the word "saint." Not only were all the saints perfectly human, not only did their sanctity enrich and deepen their humanity, but the Holiest of all the Saints, the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, was himself the most deeply and perfectly human being who ever lived on the face of the earth. We must remember that human nature was, in him, quite perfect, and at the same time completely like our own frail and suffering nature in all things except sin. Now what is the "supernatural" if not the economy of our salvation in and through the Incarnate Word?

If we are to be "perfect" as Christ is perfect, we must strive to be as perfectly human as he, in order that he may unite us with his divine being and share with us his sonship of the heavenly Father. Hence sanctity is not a matter of being *less* human, but *more* human than other men. This implies a greater capacity for concern, for suffering, for understanding, for sympathy, and also for humor, for joy, for appreciation of the good and beautiful things of life. It follows that a pretended "way of perfection" that simply destroys or frustrates human values precisely because they are human, and in order to set oneself apart from the rest of men as an object of wonder, is doomed to be nothing but a caricature. And such caricaturing of sanctity is indeed a sin against faith in the

Incarnation. It shows contempt for the humanity for which Christ did not hesitate to die on the cross.

However, we must be careful not to confuse genuinely human values with the rather less than human values that come to be accepted in a disordered society. In actual fact, we are suffering more from the distortion and underdevelopment of our deepest human tendencies than from a superabundance of animal instincts. That is why the stern asceticism that was devised to control violent passions may do more harm than good when it is applied to a person whose emotions have never properly matured and whose instinctual life is suffering from weakness and disorder.

We must reflect more deeply than we do on the effect of modern technological life upon the emotional and instinctual development of man. It is quite possible that the person whose life is divided between tending a machine and watching TV is sooner or later going to suffer a radical deprivation in his nature and humanity.

Holiness presupposes not only a normal human intelligence, properly developed and formed by Christian education; a normal human will, a trained liberty capable of self-commitment and self-oblation, but even before all this it presupposes sound and ordered human emotions. Grace builds on nature not by suppressing instinct but by healing and elevating it to a spiritual level. There must always be a proper place for healthy, instinctive spontaneity in the Christian life. The emotions and instincts of man were at work in the sacred humanity of Christ Our Lord: He showed in all things a sensitive and warmly responsive humanness. The Christian who wants to imitate his Master must learn to do so not by imposing a crude and violent control on his emotions (and in most cases his efforts to do so will be a failure) but by letting grace form and develop his emotional life in the service of charity.

Jesus asked the Pharisees: "How can you believe, who

seek glory one from another?" (Jn. 5:44). To seek a heroicity of virtue that will give us glory in the eyes of other men is in reality to weaken our faith. The true saint is not one who has become convinced that he himself is holy, but one who is overwhelmed by the realization that God, and God alone, is holy. He is so awestruck with the reality of the divine holiness that he begins to see it everywhere. Eventually, he may be able to see it in himself too: but surely he will see it there last of all, because in himself he will continue to experience the nothingness, the pseudo reality of egoism and sin. Yet even in the darkness of our disposition to evil shines the presence and the mercy of the divine Saviour. The saint is capable, as Dostoevsky said, of loving others even in their sin. For what he sees in all things and in all men is the object of the divine compassion.

The saint, then, seeks not his own glory but the glory of God. And in order that God may be glorified in all things, the saint wishes himself to be nothing but a pure instrument of the divine will. He wants himself to be simply a window through which God's mercy shines on the world. And for this he strives to be holy. He strives to practice virtue heroically, not in order to be known as a virtuous and holy man, but in order that the goodness of God may never be obscured by any selfish act of his.

Hence it is that he who loves God, and seeks the glory of God, seeks to become, by God's grace, perfect in love, as the "heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48).

IDEAS AND REALITY

It is always a little foolish to try to set down, in a few clear formulas, the essence of Christian perfection. Sometimes this has to be done. But whenever we try to do it, we must remind ourselves that we do not grasp the meaning of the words right away, and we must take steps to avoid creating the impression that sanctity can be easily achieved by following some simple formula. "Becoming a saint" is not just a matter of picking out a suitable recipe and cooking up the various ingredients of the Christian life according to a formula which pleases our own taste. Yet this is what some spiritual books would sometimes seem to do. And there are always those "holy souls" who have discovered a new method, which sums it all up, and which will henceforth make the whole thing very simple for everyone.

It is of course natural to look for a simple method of solving all spiritual problems. Traditionally, the most fundamental question a man can ask is "What must we do?" (Acts 2:37). The Christian answer, "Repent, be baptized, . . . to have your sins forgiven; then you will receive the Holy Spirit" (38), is not the exposition of a "method" or a technique. On the contrary, what St. Peter was thus telling the hearers of his first sermon on the first Pentecost, was that salvation did not consist in following a method so much as in becoming a member of the People of God, the Body of Christ, and living as a member of that Body, with the life of that People, which is a life of love. But love in this context is not simply a question of affectivity and benign interior dispositions.

The Scriptural Qualifications of Deacons

The qualifications of a deacon may be drawn from two passages in the New Testament. The establishment of the ministry of deacons as recorded in Acts chapter six provides a partial list of qualifications for this office.

But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. (Acts 6:3)

The deacon, like the elder, must be a man with a good reputation not only in the church but in the community as well. The duties of his office call for the highest level of confidence. As a very important lay leader the deacon should have the trust of the membership.

The apostles agreed that the deacons selected from the fellowship should be Spirit-filled men. Though their ministry was largely the administration of material things, Spirit-filled men were essential for the oversight of this task. The work assigned the deacons was an integral part of the church's overall ministry.

No dichotomy exists between the spiritual and the material ministries of the church. The deacons elected to wait tables in the household of faith are as much in need of the fullness of the Holy Spirit as the elders who minister the Word.

The infilling of the Holy Spirit is just as essential for service as He is for holy living. Christians so often experience futility in their efforts at service in most instances because of the absence of anointing for service. The norm for every Christian is to be Spirit-filled.

The third characteristic of good deacons given by the apostles was wisdom. The deacon was assigned to an important task

requiring him not only to serve himself but to enlist and oversee others in the accomplishment of the task. The deacons were called upon frequently to make decisions and to deal with the problems of people. The deacon must be wise in the sense that he has developed the skill of applying his knowledge in a given situation. He should be a man of good judgment.

As the church grew and spread beyond Palestine to the Gentiles the office of deacon became more important in the life of the church. When Paul instructed Timothy in matters of church order he advised him to have deacons in the churches. Paul's instructions included a guideline of qualifications to assure spiritual leadership in the office of deacon comparable to the standards for the office of elder.

Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. . . .

Let deacons be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households.

For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. (1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12-13)

The similarities as well as the differences of the qualifications of deacons to that of elders are important. Three qualities of a deacon are exactly like the qualities of eldership.

The deacon's home life is very important. He must have a solid marriage that meets scriptural standards. He must also have a well-ordered home. His children should reflect in their conduct the Christian atmosphere of the home. The support of a godly wife is certainly implied in this passage.

With the widespread need to strengthen the family this requisite for leadership should not be taken lightly by any church.

The deacon like the elder is not to be addicted to wine. The collective judgment of our fellowship from its inception until now is that believers should not use any form of alcoholic beverages. Since alcoholism is now the most threatening form

of drug abuse in western society the Christian community must refrain all the more from the use of alcoholic beverages. The deacons and the elders must provide a wholesome example by their own abstinence.

The financial practices of a candidate for the office of deacon ought not to be overlooked. The scriptures say that he is not to "be fond of sordid gain." The word *sordid* infers a shameful or dishonest gain. When one's love for money and material things is so overpowering that he is willing to compromise Christian principles to get money he is not qualified for church leadership. The deacon like the elder should be above reproach in financial matters. He should have a Spirit-given capacity to use his possessions as a stewardship for the glory of Christ. The way a man handles money is the key to his whole value system. An officer of the church who has responsibility for an important share of the finances should have a deep commitment to the values set forth in the gospel. He not only has responsibility to account for the fund, but he must by his own attitude toward money lead the church to the sanctified management of its resources.

Paul speaks not only of the characteristics of deacons that are similar to those of the elders, but he adds some characteristics not found in the list for elders. Paul advises Timothy that men of dignity should be selected for the *diaconate*. The image of the deacon should be one that commands respect. A deacon must deal with all kinds and all ages of people in the course of his duties. As a servant of Christ his bearing should enable him to minister to all.

The idea of dignity is somewhat tarnished in modern culture. So many leaders in high places have failed that cynicism has taken over in the populous. The unfortunate result of this situation is the immortalization of the undignified. The church is obligated to counter such fuzzy thinking and reassert the credibility of dignity. It is needed in the home, in the government, and in the church. Holy Spirit-implanted dignity is a quality of Christian character.

The person selected to serve as a deacon should be in control not only of his walk but also of his talk. In this ministry the deacon will be in constant contact with people in their homes, making him aware of problems that should never be discussed outside one's secret prayer closet. Careless talk damages the

work and the reputation of fellow believers. It is significant that this quality be singled out and emphasized in the instruction for deacons, and that he be encouraged to strictly adhere to this. It is a quality that should be emulated by elders and by every Christian. It is especially important that deacons avoid a double-tongue (1 Tim. 3:8). The Greek word translated *double-tongue* carries the connotation of talebearing. The seriousness of this sin can be more readily understood by comparing Proverbs 11:13 with 1 Timothy 3:8:

He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy conceals a matter. (Prov. 11:13)
Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain. (1 Tim. 3:8)

The control of the tongue is a necessity to the deacon's ministry of compassion and understanding. Only the trustworthy can visit from house to house and enjoy the high privilege of such direct exposure to the weaknesses and faults of the saints. The deacon, and for that matter any leader, can minister only to those who trust him.

The office of deacon requires not only qualities of Christian character; it also requires a deep knowledge of the things of God. Paul says,

But holding to the mystery of faith with a clear conscience. (1 Tim. 3:9)

The mystery of faith speaks of an objective faith, the content of faith. These servants of the church must have more than an ordinary understanding of that body of truth which constitutes the gospel. Deacons should be men who know and love the Word of God. The great doctrines of the Bible are their spiritual sustenance. Deacons are to minister truth with compassion.

This office, like that of the elder, is not for the novice; it requires maturity. Paul instructed Timothy that deacons were to be "tested."

And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. (1 Tim. 3:10)

Paul's use of the present imperative suggests that the testing of the man should be over a period of time. Some have erroneously concluded that deacons should have a probation period after their election to office. Paul is not suggesting a probation; he is calling for care in the selection of the deacons. Only those who have proven themselves should be considered for the office. R. C. H. Lenski, a Lutheran scholar, supports this position by calling attention to the kind of men selected in Acts six for the *diaconate*. They were tried and proven men, selected from the very best to serve as deacons.

The office of deacon should never be used as a ploy to entice some inactive member into ministry. The deacons are to come from those already active in ministry.

For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. (1 Tim. 3:13)

A distinction must be made in this verse between the technical and non-technical use of the word *deacon*. Paul is saying that those selected for the office of deacon should be men who have already served the church well by their unofficial ministry. Faithful service is the most likely way for a promising leader to come to the attention of his brethren. The New International Version seems a better translation of this verse.

Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus. (1 Tim. 3:13—NIV)

The practice of translating the participle *oi diakonasantes* as the work of a deacon comes from the Episcopal approach to the office of deacon. They follow Catholic tradition which looked upon the *diaconate* as a step in the ranks of the clergy: Men are first ordained deacons and then priests and then bishops. While it is true both from scripture and tradition that some deacons entered the ministry or became elders the Episcopal system can

hardly be justified either from this scripture or the church's experience.

Paul is here discussing the qualifications of a good deacon. Paul's concern is that the church select men who have already proven themselves in fruitful ministry. The apostle hastens to explain that active laymen are acquiring a good standing and great boldness in their faith. Spiritual growth for them is the by-product of dedicated ministry.

Deaconesses

No consideration of this passage would be complete without a careful interpretation of 1 Timothy 3:11:

Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

The use of *women* rather than *wives* indicates that among those serving in the church's ministry of compassion were women or deaconesses. While the New Testament does not mention an office of deaconess, this verse along with Romans 16:1 and 1 Timothy 5:9-10 indicate that women had a definite ministry in the early church.

Four qualifications are given for those women who serve the church as deaconesses. They are essentially the same qualifications as those required of deacons.

Among the women who ministered were the widows. Paul's instructions to Timothy suggest a category of widows enrolled by the church and supported by the church.

Let a widow be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work. (1 Tim. 5:9-10)

The regulations called for women sixty years of age or older

with a record of godly deportment. They no doubt were given opportunities of ministry among the saints such as prayer, teaching younger women, and probably as strength permitted ministry to the sick and suffering. References to their work may be found in writings of the Church Fathers.

H. P. Tiddon, Anglican scholar, suggests that women were admitted to the order of widows on the basis of past active service for Christ. Since advanced age prevented the continuation of that same level of active ministry, the widows gave themselves to devotional ministry rather than the practice of philanthropy.¹

Sixty does not seem to be an advanced age in modern terms, but considering the shorter life expectancy in the first century, a person reaching sixty years of age was considered very elderly. However, at least one ancient source, the Theodosian Code, sets sixty as the age for deaconesses. The council of Chalcedon set forty as the minimum age of a deaconess.²

It cannot be established that the church supported widows from the days of the apostles. They were considered deaconesses, but they did constitute a work force of devoted women essential to the church's total ministry. During the post-Apostolic age the order of widows was gradually absorbed by the order of deaconesses.

Kittle's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* suggests that the instruction given the older women in Titus 2:3-5 may provide some insight into the nature of the ministry carried on by widows.³

Paul says to Titus:

Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good,

that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored. (Titus 2:3-5)

These mature, godly women had a responsibility of pastoral care to the young wives of the congregation. The elders and

deacons of the primitive church recognized the role of women in Christian service and provided legitimate outlets of ministry for them.

Phoebe, of Cenchrea, was a business woman who traveled as far as Rome in the course of her activities. In her home church she served as a deaconess and by her faithful ministry won the commendation of the apostle Paul.

The pastoral epistles provide the divine standard for church order. The Holy Spirit gave Paul for the church a basic principal to be followed in selecting leaders and workers. They were all required to be spiritually minded and above reproach in their walk before men.

¹ H. P. Liddon, *Explanatory Analysis of St. Paul's First Epistle to Timothy*. Klock and Klock: Minneapolis, reprint 1978, p. 56.

² *Ibid.*, p. 56.

³ Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. IX, Wm. B. Eerdmans; Grand Rapids, 1978 edition, pp. 456, 457.

The Ministry of the Lay-Elders

The lay-elder is a member of the local church leadership team, working in a Spirit-directed community. The eldership is not a show room for individualism but an opportunity to coordinate with the whole body the Spirit-imparted gift or gifts of ministry. Lay-elders have a large and diversified range of work. A number of leaders with differing gifts can be involved.

The lay eldership is the pastor-elder's strongest support. They are his immediate helpers in the pastoral task of caring for the church. While the work of elders touches all the ministries of the church the focus of the eldership is upon the spiritual ministries. Every church should have a job description which details the functions assigned the lay-elders. The pastor's input in drafting this document is critical, for he is the supervisor of the elders since their activities relates to his work. The lay-elders, more than any other members in the assembly, assist the pastor or pastors.

Most of the functions of the eldership fall within the circle of pastoral care. The pastor must know that the elders are committed and prepared for the kinds of spiritual duties they are expected to carry out. It is for this reason the scriptural qualifications for lay-elders are as high as those of the pastor-elder.

The best overview of pastoral care found in scripture is Paul's address to the Ephesian elders.

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. (Acts 20:28)

The writer to the Hebrews particularizes the pastoral role.

This chapter does not begin to exhaust the possibilities of lay-elder ministry. As churches grow their need for leadership grows. The eldership keeps finding new and creative ways to support leadership of their pastor and to promote the involvement of the laity in the service of Christ.

The Ministry of the Deacons

The word *minister* is common to all who serve Christ in His church. It occurs some one hundred times in the New Testament referring both to the service of the clergy and the laity. The apostle Paul spoke of himself as a minister in Colossians 1:23. In Ephesians 4:12 the work of the ministry means the Christian service of every member of the body of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is called a "minister." Against such a broad understanding of ministry it is necessary to place the technical concept of ministry as it relates to deacons and to their female counterparts, the deaconesses.

The same Greek word translated minister is also translated deacon. Deacon is an English transliteration of the Greek word. The deacon is a special kind of minister characterized by compassion and concern for the needs of others. The nature of his office is an index to his work. The first seven deacons were selected at the direction of the apostles to increase the work force of the Jerusalem church. The deacons were to assume leadership in the work for which their gifts fitted them and by so doing would release other brethren whose gifts were prayer and the ministry of the Word.

The modern deacon has just as important a role as did the ancient deacons. With the complexity of society and the sophistication of the church more servants than ever are needed to do the work. Every church needs well-qualified deacons.

The Leadership Role of the Deacon

The office of deacon is a position of leadership. The deacon does not personally perform all the ministries assigned the deacon board. As a leader he recruits and trains helpers so the work force is large enough to carry out its responsibilities. In far too

many churches the deacon does all the work relating to the material aspects of the church. The *diaconate* can enlarge its ministry by involving other lay people in the work. The board of deacons should determine those deacons with the gifts to enlist others and teach them the work. One deacon could be delegated to such a ministry. Other deacons may have gifts of evangelism, or of showing mercy, or of giving. All of these abilities enhance the work of the deacon board.

Each church will want to write its own job description for deacons listing the areas the leadership has agreed should be their function. That guideline should include at least some of the tasks discussed in this chapter. The local church, because of its circumstances, may create other functions for the deacons.

The Distribution of Benevolences

Traditionally, deacons have been assigned to administer the benevolences of the church. Jesus said, "The poor you have always with you." In affluent modern nations there are still the poor. The poor among the saints should be the first concern of the church. The church must think of the poor in the non-Christian community and seek to minister to them. True social concern born of the love of God is the paramount task of the deacon.

Churches located in large metropolitan areas may be surrounded by poverty. The church may be in a changing neighborhood with two or more ethnic communities moving toward control. Because of a poorly conceived deaconship the opportunities to minister in such a community are overlooked. The deacons can build bridges to the community at large. Some congregations have been blessed by establishing "head-start" classes for ethnic children. Family clinics to instruct people in the productive use of their money would be a help. If language is a problem, provide translators and services for people with little or no knowledge of English. Help them find jobs, fill out alien papers and offer classes to teach them English. Practical ministries of this kind in the poor community will open doors for the gospel.

It is not unusual for families within the church to suffer disasters that leave them destitute. The deacons should have at

their disposal money that can be used to relieve the needs of the suffering. Many congregations follow the practice of taking a free-will offering for the deacons' fund at each communion service. Some funds should probably be budgeted for the deacons fund. A loss of job, extended illness, fires, floods, earthquakes and many other conditions come upon both Christian and the non-Christian. The credibility of the church's compassion is established as much by what it does for its own as by what it does for the non-church people.

The Senior Citizen

The twentieth century church has an exciting opportunity of ministry to the elderly. There are more people of retirement age than ever before in our culture. The needs of this group are not always financial. Elderly people need personal attention. Provision should be made for them to participate in group activity. A sizable work force should be assigned to this ministry. Some of the deacons as well as members of the congregation should give this ministry their attention.

Elderly people who are shut-in and unable to attend church should not be left out of the life and activity of the church. Deacons could visit them on a regular basis and teach them the Sunday school lesson. Every church needs a home department for these people in its Sunday school. When the line of communications are kept open these people can make a contribution to the church. Some might be able from their wheel chair or bed to use a telephone. A part of the church's telephone prayer chain could be given them to make contacts when special prayer requests are being circulated. Find something meaningful for them to do. They should be given a church bulletin each week and a set of offering envelopes. In one church pastored by the author two of the biggest contributors to foreign missions were shut-ins past seventy years of age. With a little effort the home department could be ministering to a hundred people. They and their families would know that the church cares.

Ministry to the Sick

The ministry of the deacons to the sick is an ancient tradition.

While the elders are delegated to the ministry of healing, the deacons have the practical care of the sick. How helpful to a family with the mother hospitalized to have the evening meal prepared and brought to the home. What a relief to the husband and father to have a baby sitting service for his pre-school age children while he visits the hospital. What wife would not be comforted by the fact that the deacons cared for the lawn while her husband was hospitalized or perhaps they finished an incompleted paint job. The ministry of compassion to the sick and their families must go beyond a card and some flowers. Changing off nights with a weary spouse at the bedside of a seriously sick husband or wife would help so much to lift their load of care.

Hospitality

The *diaconate* has a ministry of hospitality. The need for entertaining fellow Christians when they traveled was necessary in the ancient church. Public inns and taverns were not available to Christians so the saints opened their homes for this purpose. Modern believers do not have this problem. Motels and hotels are everywhere, with food service and just about any service needed by the traveler. But though the culture has changed, the need for hospitality has not changed. What an exciting ministry a deacon and his family could enjoy by opening their home to overseas missionaries arriving at an airport near their location. Providing overnight lodging, meals, and transportation for the missionary family would be a wonderful expression of the love of Christ in terms of true hospitality.

What about the many new families that visit the church in the course of a month. Each of them could be invited to a home for Sunday dinner. This kind of hospitality would demonstrate the real concern of the church for people and not just statistics.

The deacons might be assigned to oversee the ushers since ushering is a form of hospitality. The initial impression of visitors to the church are often formed by the conduct of the ushers. While the deacons probably cannot assume this task themselves because of their work load, they could be in charge of recruiting, training and overseeing the ushers.

The deacons, deaconesses, and their families are not per-

sonally responsible to care for all of the hospitality needs of the church. They should set a good example by their own participation in this ministry, but they must unite all the members in doing the work of entertaining strangers.

The Deacons and the Ordinances

The elders are usually in charge of the spiritual ministries of the church and assist the pastor with the preparation of candidates for baptism and in the distribution of the Lord's Supper. Traditionally the deacons have also related to both of these ordinances. The provision and maintenance of the equipment necessary for baptism is often the work of the deacons. Deaconesses are usually responsible for maintaining and laundering the baptismal robes. The deacons can be enlisted to assist the men at the baptismal service while the deaconesses assist the women. It is helpful to have one of the deacons standing by the baptistry or standing by the pastor in the baptistry to assist him in the event of any difficulty. Good organization and proper planning can make the mechanics of the service something worthy of its high spiritual meaning.

Another humble but beautiful service for deacons and deaconesses is the care of the communion ware. Maintaining a fresh supply of unleavened bread and the grape juice is essential. Washing and storing the communion ware after each service and laundering the linens can be done for the glory of God. A practical system for this responsibility is to assign a deacon and his wife to care for the communion preparation each quarter of the year. One of the deacons should be put in charge of instructing the communion custodians as to their responsibility and the proper procedure. Data should be given them as to the number of portions to prepare. How many reserve portions should there be for unexpected guests or a larger than usual attendance of members. They should also be instructed as to setting the table. The deacon in charge of communion custodians should confer regularly with the pastor as to any necessary change in procedure.

In some churches the elders on a regular basis ask the deacons to assist them in the distribution of the elements at the communion service. It is also helpful for deacons to assist the pastor

and the elders in serving communion to the shut-ins and the sick.

Stewardship

The finances of the local church are a part of the broad concerns of the deacons. The distribution of the benevolences of the church is only the beginning of their concern with finances. The deacon board is the ideal agency of the local church structure to promote stewardship. The average evangelical church fails to train its membership in the Christ-like use of their money. The proper management of money and material resources is a Christian's duty. Stewardship, a necessary discipline for the godly, is a form of service to Christ. Either the believer learns to control his money or his money will control him.

Christians need basic instructions about the stewardship of time, talents, possessions, and money. If every Christian were to obey the Spirit in this regard there would be no financial lack in the ministries of the church. Out of the abundance flows money to finance the overseas outreach and all the supporting institutions at home. The deacons should be knowledgeable in what the Bible teaches on this subject, and conducting classes for the membership. They should distribute sound literature on tithing and all forms of giving. A strong *diaconate* might comprise the finance committee for the congregation.

The deacons may discover some of their members are able to give wise counsel regarding the Christian use of money. Families with extremely difficult financial problems could be counseled by understanding members of the deacon board. Such assistance can revolutionize a family. The right use of their money would not only give them the joy of sharing with Christ but it would greatly improve their living conditions.

Ministry to Special Community Needs

The jails, prisons, and other corrective institutions should not be overlooked by the local church in its compassionate outreach to the community. In most communities it is possible for responsible church representatives to minister to the prisons.

Regular services, Bible classes, and literature brings light and blessing within the bleak walls of these institutions. The deacons provide the logical leadership for such a program. Some deacons may have a burden for this work and show evidence that the Holy Spirit has gifted them to reach the hearts of prisoners. From this leadership a team may be selected to cover the penal institutions in the area.

The deacons' ministry goes beyond contact with the prisoners. The families of the prisoners have great needs which are often neglected by both the community and the church. The deacons and the deaconesses will find it most rewarding to minister to prisoners and their families.

The Deacons and Minorities or Ethnic

The influx of new immigrants and refugees plus the black population and aboriginals make the United States and Canada a veritable mosaic of diverse people. The life of the church in today's world is deeply touched by the realities of such pluralism. The rate of neighborhood change is sometimes so rapid as to leave a congregation in ruin and frustration. Some of this could be avoided if the church would keep constant surveillance of its community and react in love to the changes that take place. When new people come into a neighborhood whose language, race, and culture are different from the old residents, some serious effort to build bridges to these new people must come from the church. It should be remembered that the first deacons were appointed in response to tension between two different culture groups, the Hellenistic Jews and the Aramaic-speaking Jews. Modern deacons are called to deal with the same tensions. If the community requires it, some deacons should be assigned to the task of communicating the love of Christ to new neighbors.

In 1970, the Home Missions Board of the Christian Reformed Church called a conference of selected pastors and laymen to discuss the church's mission in today's world. A book containing the papers of that conference was published with the title, *Who in the World?* It speaks in everyday language about the church's ministry to the non-Christian community. It consistently takes the reader back to the New Testament church to

demonstrate the fact that the early church had discovered the forms and methods of effective ministry in the world. The *diaconate* is singled out as an example of a New Testament office that is relevant for now.

"The *diaconate*, then, is the organizational way of accepting from Jesus His sign of the towel, the symbol of servanthood. But two things have to be remembered here: First, the whole church is a *diaconate*. For practical reasons, some of the servant's task is done by deacons. But Jesus' whole life was spent in service, and this is what He asks of all who follow Him. *Diaconate* spells out the whole character, the full spirit, and the great purpose of the church's mission in the world. The body of Christ is not a loose body of separated functions. The whole body is involved in the service. And the official deacons have the right to tap the talents and resources of every member. For we are all limbs of one body."¹

Never in the long history of the church has the office of deacon been so necessary. Never has it had such broad opportunities of ministry. The modern deacon is a model of servanthood to the congregation. He is a leader in that he discovers and motivates into action the latent abilities in the congregation. The deacon is the church's best liason to the non-Christian community.

¹ Clifford Christians, Earl Schipper, Wesley Smeder, *Who in the World?*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1972, p. 134.

Spiritual Gifts for Elders and Deacons

The New Testament speaks of leaders that are gifted by the Holy Spirit for ministry. The term gift is used to translate the Greek word *charismata*. *Charismata* is related to the Greek word for grace and speaks of divinely imparted ability to minister. Therefore, this kind of leadership is called *charismatic* leadership in theological treatments of the subject. (This term should not be confused with today's popular use of the term charismatic as it refers to the neo-Pentecostal movement.) Some church renewal writers and some church historians have insisted that the church in its purest days, the days of the apostles, knew only a charismatic leadership. The argument continues that office-bearing positions of leadership became prominent as the charismatic leadership phased out. The difficulty with that position is readily seen upon examining the New Testament record. The office-bearing elders and deacons emerged early in the experience of the church and existed along side the charismatic leadership. In fact, spiritual gifts were necessary to the office-bearing leaders so that no noticeable dichotomy existed between office-bearing leaders and charismatic leaders in the first century church. The leadership of the early church was one as should be the leadership of the modern church. Elders and deacons on occasion exercised the gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11. Elders functioned in pastoral care roles and as teachers. Phillip, one of the deacons of the Jerusalem church, was greatly used of God as an evangelist and a church planter.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are not religious playthings but rich provisions of His grace for the purpose of ministry. Ministry is synonymous with service. The only proper use of gifts is to glorify Jesus Christ by serving Him. That explains Peter's reference to the exercise of gifts as stewardship (1 Pet. 4:10). Be-

lievers must some day in the presence of Christ give an account of their use of the gifts imparted by His Spirit.

To possess a gift is to be responsible for the use and the development of that God-given ability for the glory of Christ and the edification of His church. Peter said,

As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (1 Pet. 4:10)

The Stewardship of Gifts

Gifts are designed for ministry. Peter's use of the term *steward* associates the appropriate use of gifts with the role of the servant. Arndt and Gingrich translate the Greek word *kaloi oikonomoi* as

"good administrators of the varied grace of God."¹

The steward was a manager or administrator usually of his master's property. As a servant he exercised all the ability he could muster to make his master's investment profitable. The investment of Christ in the believer is the ability to minister for the good of others. To waste that gift is a loss to the believer, to others, and to God.

Gifts and Leadership

The gifts are not only related to ministry in the New Testament scriptures, they are also related to leadership in the church. The leader Christ calls He also equips with gifts appropriate to his responsibility. It is remarkable how many of the gifts are by their very nature intended for leadership. This concept is especially obvious in Eph. 4:11-12:

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.

In the above passage Paul names five functions of ministry necessary to the church's welfare. He is more concerned with the people who minister than with their particular gifts. The gifted officers enumerated here are a special gift of Christ to His church.

The apostle Paul evidently saw a close relationship between leadership and gifts. Another passage in his epistles relating to this subject is 1 Cor. 12:28-30:

And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they?

All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?

In listing the divine appointments for leadership the Apostle mixes the offices with the gifts. He moves from talking about persons, apostles, prophets, and teachers to the abstract term *miracles* as though they were related items in a sequence. He meant by that abstract term those who do miracles. The implication of this sequence is that all who have an office have a gift. It is the responsibility of the assembly to select men to office which possess a gift corresponding to that office. The contemporary church tends to select men to office without regard to their gifts. The inevitable result of such an unscriptural procedure is poor leadership contributing to the progressive decline of the church. Effective ministry must be in the power of the Holy Spirit. The leadership of Christ's church is gifted by the Spirit to assure spiritual ministry to the body.

Necessary Credentials for Leadership

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to equip leaders for their ministry to the church. Enabling for Christian service is divine. Natural talents, attractive personality, wide experience, and a good education may do much to enrich a person's life, but none of these qualities fit a man to serve Christ. The natural man

makes his judgments of character on the outward appearance, but this method will not suffice in the selection of Christian leadership.

The church needs from its leaders sound teaching, wisdom, protection, guidance, direction and good order. The abilities to service these needs come from the Holy Spirit. Pastor-elders, lay-elders, and deacons must have gifts to minister to the body as Christ intends they should. The gifts given to leaders are for the purpose of equipping every believer for service. If gifts are neglected at the leadership level, the possibility of the gifts of all the members coming into use is very unlikely.

Safeguards to the purity and vitality of the church have been built into the divine order of the church administration and ministry. Positions of leadership have their own peculiar kinds of temptation. Pride and the abuse of authority are the most insidious and those which most frequently occur. Honoring the New Testament principle of gifts is one means of overcoming these temptations. Dr. A. B. Simpson grasped this truth in Paul's discussion of the order of gifts.

"The order of spiritual gifts is very instructive and also humiliating. The first mentioned gifts are those of the apostles, prophets and teachers, the spiritual ministries of the church. Next comes the miraculous gifts of healing subordinate to spiritual ministry—important but not preeminent. Thirdly comes the helps, people that just fit in, and by love, fellowship and prayer and often subordinate service, fill up the innumerable places and become the countless links without which all else would be in vain. After these in a lower order, come the governments, the rulers, the people with authority, wisely placed near the bottom to keep them from falling over with the weight of importance. No one can rule another until he has walked in the ranks and learned to keep his head low."²

Though the function of administration is fraught with dangers of spiritual pride, lording it over the flock, and self-aggrandizement it is nevertheless essential to the wellbeing of the church. It is so essential that the Holy Spirit distributes gifts for the purpose of effective administration. Mention is made in

1 Cor. 12:30 of the gift of "governments" or as the newer versions put it "administrations." The Greek word *kubernasis* comes from a verb form meaning "to steer." It is a nautical term and could be translated "shipmaster" or "helmsman." It refers to one who steers a ship. Kittle says of this word,

"The reference can only be to the specific gifts which qualify a Christian to be a helmsman to his congregation, i.e., a true director of its order and therewith of its life."

"... No society can exist without some order and directions. It is the grace of God to give gifts which equip for government."³

The principles of management have become an important field of study in modern terms. The size and complexity of business, institutions, and government require very competent and sophisticated administration. The New Testament teaches that the expertise to manage the house of God is on an entirely different basis. Divine management is a charisma given by the Holy Spirit to those called to leadership.

The pastor and the elders are under mandate to give order to the life and activities of the church. God has called the pastor in particular to be a helmsman of the ship of Zion, the church. More than one administrator is needed in a congregation. The pastor should have the ability to oversee the work and to coordinate the efforts of all who display this gift. Lay-elders as well as pastors may have the gift of administration. The church is sailing through troubled waters at this point in history and desperately needs men at the helm that lead with certainty and confidence.

The second gift related to church government is found in Romans 12:8:

... he who leads with diligence ...

The Greek word *proistamenos* literally means to be placed in the front of the line. The King James Version translates it "rule." It is the gift of ruling in the sense of leading the congregation. Kittle finds a deeper meaning in the context of this word.

"In most cases *proistami* seems to have the sense 'to lead,' but context shows in each case that one must take into account sense 'to care for . . . ' this is explained by the fact that caring was the obligation of leading members of the infant church. . . ."⁴

The gift of leading is also associated with the pastor. The three principle passages dealing with the pastor-elder all use some form of this verb (1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:5; 5:17) indicating that a pastor must be a good leader. He is the example and the teacher of leadership principles to the laymen. The responsibilities of church leadership are so complex and far reaching that a wise pastor will encourage the gift of leadership among the lay elders. Such gifted lay leaders share with the pastor the responsibility of envisioning the church's work and articulating that vision to the congregation.

The Gift of Prophecy

The pastor's primary function is preaching the Word of God. There are spiritual gifts which relate to this important function. Prophecy is one such gift. Ordinarily prophecy is interpreted to mean foretelling future events. It does have that function at times, but most of the prophecy found in scripture is straightforward preaching which applies revealed truth to the current situation of the people of God. Not all preaching is prophecy but it is one kind of preaching needed in every congregation. A lay-elder may also have the gift of prophecy, with unusual insight into the spiritual needs of the congregation. The pastor should cherish and nurture the gift of prophecy wherever he may find it among the lay-elders.

The apostle Paul in his first letter to Timothy makes an interesting statement regarding the gift of prophecy as it relates to the eldership.

Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. (1 Tim. 4:14)

Apparently at Timothy's ordination elders were given the in-

sight by the Holy Spirit to identify Timothy's gift for ministry. Paul advises Timothy to develop that gift by diligent study and faithful service.

Pastoral Care

Since both pastors and lay-elders engage in pastoral care the gift of shepherding will equip them for this ministry. The flock of God not only needs oversight but they also need to be fed and guided and guarded. Pastoral care is an art learned from the Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. He imparts through the Holy Spirit the enabling to care for God's people. Pastoral care implies a direct personal ministry to the people of the congregation. To have the insights, skills and patience to shepherd the great diversity of people which make up any one congregation requires divine assistance. Many churches suffer from the lack of pastoral care. If the pastor must carry this whole load in addition to his other required duties, the individual needs of the fellowship will go unattended. The pastor may multiply his ability to do the work of pastoral care by finding and developing among the elders those with gifts for this work.

The Gifts of Healings

Christ gave to His church the ministry of healing. In Christ's name and by His authority the church is commissioned to heal. The prescribed order of the healing ministry is revealed in the scripture. When Christians are sick they are to call the elders of the church. The elders are instructed by the scriptures to anoint the sick with oil and pray over them in the name of Jesus.

Since the elders have been assigned this ministry it is reasonable to believe that the gifts of healings are most frequently distributed among the elders. The Biblical order for a healing service calls for a plurality of elders to participate in anointing and prayer. When the Biblical order is carried out the integrity of the ministry of healing is maintained. Christ is always projected as the Healer. The elders and the whole church should look to Christ as Head over His church to give the eldership the gifts of healings necessary to meet their congregational needs.

Since the deacons of the church are not engaged in oversight

and pastoral care their gifts coincide with their ministries. The New Testament suggests a number of gifts that should be exercised by the *diaconate*. The deacons of the church need gifts that fit them for ministries of compassion. They serve the practical needs of the family of God and sometimes the non-Christian community. Peter and Paul both speak of the gift of service. Certainly every deacon and deaconess needs the gift of service and they need the strength which God supplies to perform that service (1 Pet. 4:11). The deacon who devotes his time to ministering in a sick room will need the gift of showing mercy. One man of God spent years in a large city hospital shaving patients, trimming their toe nails and finger nails. This unglamorous ministry opened up doors of blessing and gospel outreach that many a pastor would envy. The gift of the Spirit is always exactly what is needed to do the work, but the gift can function only when the believer has consecrated himself to service.

The Gift of Helps

The same Holy Spirit who gifted men in the time of Moses to work in precious metal and other highly skilled crafts necessary in constructing the tabernacle, gifts deacons today to use tools to serve Christ in the caring of the church's physical properties. The hammer and the saw used in the name of Christ is a ministry. The oversight of the buildings to maintain proper repairs and an attractive appearance is also a ministry unto the Lord. The deacons or other lay leaders called by the body and by the Lord to these ministries have every right to believe that the Holy Spirit will gift them for their labors.

The Gift of Giving

The very nature of the deacon's work would give him a concern for Christian stewardship. The deacon seeks to use the church's resources to help those in need. What better gift might a deacon possess than that of giving. Paul explains the gift of giving should be exercised with liberality (Rom. 12:8). The generosity of the deacons should provide an example for the whole congregation. The consistent giving of leadership en-

courages every member to honor the Lord by their own faithfulness in giving.

The Gift of Faith

Some gifts are distributed to all the leaders of the church and among these is the gift of faith. It must be understood that faith in this context does not refer to saving faith but rather a working faith. It is the faith to believe that God will work out His plan and provide abundantly for it. Leadership may dream dreams and have visions of outreach and enlargement, but they will never be launched without faith. Most of God's work must be undertaken with inadequate resources and in the face of seemingly unsurmountable obstacles. The success of the project can only be attributed to the fact that God is pleased with the faith of His people. Faith unlocks for the church the invisible supply of resources in the heavenly places. The present affluence of churches in the western world has not removed the need to trust God for His work. The church on the move is the church whose pastor, elders, and deacons seek God's will for the church's ministry and in simple faith believe Him for the resources to accomplish that ministry.

The gifts of the Spirit speak of the continued need of the supernatural in the life of the church. While churches own properties, handle large sums of money, recruit and train people, the church is not just another organization or a business or a corporation. The success of the work of Christ's church has a divine origin. Whatever helpful ideas may be drawn from modern management concepts and other disciplines of learning, they cannot replace the need for the gifts of the Spirit.

¹ W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1974 edition, p. 562.

² A. B. Simpson, *Christ in the Bible Series: I Corinthians*, Christian Publications, Inc., Harrisburg, Pa., p. 102.

Stewardship Questionnaire

Safety Training
First Aid
Bullying Safety
Neighborhood Safety

The Scriptural Qualifications of Deacons

The qualifications of a deacon may be drawn from two passages in the New Testament. The establishment of the ministry of deacons as recorded in Acts chapter six provides a partial list of qualifications for this office.

But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. (Acts 6:3)

The deacon, like the elder, must be a man with a good reputation not only in the church but in the community as well. The duties of his office call for the highest level of confidence. As a very important lay leader the deacon should have the trust of the membership.

The apostles agreed that the deacons selected from the fellowship should be Spirit-filled men. Though their ministry was largely the administration of material things, Spirit-filled men were essential for the oversight of this task. The work assigned the deacons was an integral part of the church's overall ministry.

No dichotomy exists between the spiritual and the material ministries of the church. The deacons elected to wait tables in the household of faith are as much in need of the fullness of the Holy Spirit as the elders who minister the Word.

The infilling of the Holy Spirit is just as essential for service as He is for holy living. Christians so often experience futility in their efforts at service in most instances because of the absence of anointing for service. The norm for every Christian is to be Spirit-filled.

The third characteristic of good deacons given by the apostles was wisdom. The deacon was assigned to an important task

requiring him not only to serve himself but to enlist and oversee others in the accomplishment of the task. The deacons were called upon frequently to make decisions and to deal with the problems of people. The deacon must be wise in the sense that he has developed the skill of applying his knowledge in a given situation. He should be a man of good judgment.

As the church grew and spread beyond Palestine to the Gentiles the office of deacon became more important in the life of the church. When Paul instructed Timothy in matters of church order he advised him to have deacons in the churches. Paul's instructions included a guideline of qualifications to assure spiritual leadership in the office of deacon comparable to the standards for the office of elder.

Dacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. . . .

Let deacons be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households.

For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. (1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12-13)

The similarities as well as the differences of the qualifications of deacons to that of elders are important. Three qualities of a deacon are exactly like the qualities of eldership.

The deacon's home life is very important. He must have a solid marriage that meets scriptural standards. He must also have a well-ordered home. His children should reflect in their conduct the Christian atmosphere of the home. The support of a godly wife is certainly implied in this passage.

With the widespread need to strengthen the family this requisite for leadership should not be taken lightly by any church.

The deacon like the elder is not to be addicted to wine. The collective judgment of our fellowship from its inception until now is that believers should not use any form of alcoholic beverages. Since alcoholism is now the most threatening form

of drug abuse in western society the Christian community must refrain all the more from the use of alcoholic beverages. The deacons and the elders must provide a wholesome example by their own abstinence.

The financial practices of a candidate for the office of deacon ought not to be overlooked. The scriptures say that he is not to "be fond of sordid gain." The word *sordid* infers a shameful or dishonest gain. When one's love for money and material things is so overpowering that he is willing to compromise Christian principles to get money he is not qualified for church leadership. The deacon like the elder should be above reproach in financial matters. He should have a Spirit-given capacity to use his possessions as a stewardship for the glory of Christ. The way a man handles money is the key to his whole value system. An officer of the church who has responsibility for an important share of the finances should have a deep commitment to the values set forth in the gospel. He not only has responsibility to account for the fund, but he must by his own attitude toward money lead the church to the sanctified management of its resources.

Paul speaks not only of the characteristics of deacons that are similar to those of the elders, but he adds some characteristics not found in the list for elders. Paul advises Timothy that men of dignity should be selected for the *diaconate*. The image of the deacon should be one that commands respect. A deacon must deal with all kinds and all ages of people in the course of his duties. As a servant of Christ his bearing should enable him to minister to all.

The idea of dignity is somewhat tarnished in modern culture. So many leaders in high places have failed that cynicism has taken over in the populous. The unfortunate result of this situation is the immortalization of the undignified. The church is obligated to counter such fuzzy thinking and reassert the credibility of dignity. It is needed in the home, in the government, and in the church. Holy Spirit-implanted dignity is a quality of Christian character.

The person selected to serve as a deacon should be in control not only of his walk but also of his talk. In this ministry the deacon will be in constant contact with people in their homes, making him aware of problems that should never be discussed outside one's secret prayer closet. Careless talk damages the

work and the reputation of fellow believers. It is significant that this quality be singled out and emphasized in the instruction for deacons, and that he be encouraged to strictly adhere to this. It is a quality that should be emulated by elders and by every Christian. It is especially important that deacons avoid a double-tongue (1 Tim. 3:8). The Greek word translated *double-tongue* carries the connotation of talebearing. The seriousness of this sin can be more readily understood by comparing Proverbs 11:13 with 1 Timothy 3:8:

He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy conceals a matter. (Prov. 11:13)

Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain. (1 Tim. 3:8)

The control of the tongue is a necessity to the deacon's ministry of compassion and understanding. Only the trustworthy can visit from house to house and enjoy the high privilege of such direct exposure to the weaknesses and faults of the saints. The deacon, and for that matter any leader, can minister only to those who trust him.

The office of deacon requires not only qualities of Christian character; it also requires a deep knowledge of the things of God. Paul says,

But holding to the mystery of faith with a clear conscience. (1 Tim. 3:9)

The mystery of faith speaks of an objective faith, the content of faith. These servants of the church must have more than an ordinary understanding of that body of truth which constitutes the gospel. Deacons should be men who know and love the Word of God. The great doctrines of the Bible are their spiritual sustenance. Deacons are to minister truth with compassion.

This office, like that of the elder, is not for the novice; it requires maturity. Paul instructed Timothy that deacons were to be "tested."

And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. (1 Tim. 3:10)

Paul's use of the present imperative suggests that the testing of the man should be over a period of time. Some have erroneously concluded that deacons should have a probation period after their election to office. Paul is not suggesting a probation; he is calling for care in the selection of the deacons. Only those who have proven themselves should be considered for the office. R. C. H. Lenski, a Lutheran scholar, supports this position by calling attention to the kind of men selected in Acts six for the *diaconate*. They were tried and proven men, selected from the very best to serve as deacons.

The office of deacon should never be used as a ploy to entice some inactive member into ministry. The deacons are to come from those already active in ministry.

For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. (1 Tim. 3:13)

A distinction must be made in this verse between the technical and non-technical use of the word *deacon*. Paul is saying that those selected for the office of deacon should be men who have already served the church well by their unofficial ministry. Faithful service is the most likely way for a promising leader to come to the attention of his brethren. The New International Version seems a better translation of this verse.

Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus. (1 Tim. 3:13—NIV)

The practice of translating the participle *oi diakonasantes* as the work of a deacon comes from the Episcopal approach to the office of deacon. They follow Catholic tradition which looked upon the *diaconate* as a step in the ranks of the clergy: Men are first ordained deacons and then priests and then bishops. While it is true both from scripture and tradition that some deacons entered the ministry or became elders the Episcopal system can

hardly be justified either from this scripture or the church's experience.

Paul is here discussing the qualifications of a good deacon. Paul's concern is that the church select men who have already proven themselves in fruitful ministry. The apostle hastens to explain that active laymen are acquiring a good standing and great boldness in their faith. Spiritual growth for them is the by-product of dedicated ministry.

Deaconesses

No consideration of this passage would be complete without a careful interpretation of 1 Timothy 3:11:

Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

The use of *women* rather than *wives* indicates that among those serving in the church's ministry of compassion were women or deaconesses. While the New Testament does not mention an office of deaconess, this verse along with Romans 16:1 and 1 Timothy 5:9-10 indicate that women had a definite ministry in the early church.

Four qualifications are given for those women who serve the church as deaconesses. They are essentially the same qualifications as those required of deacons.

Among the women who ministered were the widows. Paul's instructions to Timothy suggest a category of widows enrolled by the church and supported by the church.

Let a widow be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work. (1 Tim. 5:9-10)

The regulations called for women sixty years of age or older

with a record of godly deportment. They no doubt were given opportunities of ministry among the saints such as prayer, teaching younger women, and probably as strength permitted ministry to the sick and suffering. References to their work may be found in writings of the Church Fathers.

H. P. Tiddon, Anglican scholar, suggests that women were admitted to the order of widows on the basis of past active service for Christ. Since advanced age prevented the continuation of that same level of active ministry, the widows gave themselves to devotional ministry rather than the practice of philanthropy.¹

Sixty does not seem to be an advanced age in modern terms, but considering the shorter life expectancy in the first century, a person reaching sixty years of age was considered very elderly. However, at least one ancient source, the Theodosian Code, sets sixty as the age for deaconesses. The council of Chalcedon set forty as the minimum age of a deaconess.²

It cannot be established that the church supported widows from the days of the apostles. They were considered deaconesses, but they did constitute a work force of devoted women essential to the church's total ministry. During the post-Apostolic age the order of widows was gradually absorbed by the order of deaconesses.

Kittle's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* suggests that the instruction given the older women in Titus 2:3-5 may provide some insight into the nature of the ministry carried on by widows.³

Paul says to Titus:

Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good,

that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored. (Titus 2:3-5)

These mature, godly women had a responsibility of pastoral care to the young wives of the congregation. The elders and

deacons of the primitive church recognized the role of women in Christian service and provided legitimate outlets of ministry for them.

Phoebe, of Cenchrea, was a business woman who traveled as far as Rome in the course of her activities. In her home church she served as a deaconess and by her faithful ministry won the commendation of the apostle Paul.

The pastoral epistles provide the divine standard for church order. The Holy Spirit gave Paul for the church a basic principal to be followed in selecting leaders and workers. They were all required to be spiritually minded and above reproach in their walk before men.

¹ H. P. Liddon, *Explanatory Analysis of St. Paul's First Epistle to Timothy*. Klock and Klock: Minneapolis, reprint 1978, p. 56.

² Ibid., p. 56.

³ Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. IX, Wm. B. Eerdmans; Grand Rapids, 1978 edition, pp. 456, 457.

The Ministry of the Lay-Elders

The lay-elder is a member of the local church leadership team, working in a Spirit-directed community. The eldership is not a show room for individualism but an opportunity to coordinate with the whole body the Spirit-imparted gift or gifts of ministry. Lay-elders have a large and diversified range of work. A number of leaders with differing gifts can be involved.

The lay eldership is the pastor-elder's strongest support. They are his immediate helpers in the pastoral task of caring for the church. While the work of elders touches all the ministries of the church the focus of the eldership is upon the spiritual ministries. Every church should have a job description which details the functions assigned the lay-elders. The pastor's input in drafting this document is critical, for he is the supervisor of the elders since their activities relates to his work. The lay-elders, more than any other members in the assembly, assist the pastor or pastors.

Most of the functions of the eldership fall within the circle of pastoral care. The pastor must know that the elders are committed and prepared for the kinds of spiritual duties they are expected to carry out. It is for this reason the scriptural qualifications for lay-elders are as high as those of the pastor-elder.

The best overview of pastoral care found in scripture is Paul's address to the Ephesian elders.

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. (Acts 20:28)

The writer to the Hebrews particularizes the pastoral role.

This chapter does not begin to exhaust the possibilities of lay-elder ministry. As churches grow their need for leadership grows. The eldership keeps finding new and creative ways to support leadership of their pastor and to promote the involvement of the laity in the service of Christ.

The Ministry of the Deacons

The word *minister* is common to all who serve Christ in His church. It occurs some one hundred times in the New Testament referring both to the service of the clergy and the laity. The apostle Paul spoke of himself as a minister in Colossians 1:23. In Ephesians 4:12 the work of the ministry means the Christian service of every member of the body of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is called a "minister." Against such a broad understanding of ministry it is necessary to place the technical concept of ministry as it relates to deacons and to their female counterparts, the deaconesses.

The same Greek word translated minister is also translated deacon. Deacon is an English transliteration of the Greek word. The deacon is a special kind of minister characterized by compassion and concern for the needs of others. The nature of his office is an index to his work. The first seven deacons were selected at the direction of the apostles to increase the work force of the Jerusalem church. The deacons were to assume leadership in the work for which their gifts fitted them and by so doing would release other brethren whose gifts were prayer and the ministry of the Word.

The modern deacon has just as important a role as did the ancient deacons. With the complexity of society and the sophistication of the church more servants than ever are needed to do the work. Every church needs well-qualified deacons.

The Leadership Role of the Deacon

The office of deacon is a position of leadership. The deacon does not personally perform all the ministries assigned the deacon board. As a leader he recruits and trains helpers so the work force is large enough to carry out its responsibilities. In far too

many churches the deacon does all the work relating to the material aspects of the church. The *diaconate* can enlarge its ministry by involving other lay people in the work. The board of deacons should determine those deacons with the gifts to enlist others and teach them the work. One deacon could be delegated to such a ministry. Other deacons may have gifts of evangelism, or of showing mercy, or of giving. All of these abilities enhance the work of the deacon board.

Each church will want to write its own job description for deacons listing the areas the leadership has agreed should be their function. That guideline should include at least some of the tasks discussed in this chapter. The local church, because of its circumstances, may create other functions for the deacons.

The Distribution of Benevolences

Traditionally, deacons have been assigned to administer the benevolences of the church. Jesus said, "The poor you have always with you." In affluent modern nations there are still the poor. The poor among the saints should be the first concern of the church. The church must think of the poor in the non-Christian community and seek to minister to them. True social concern born of the love of God is the paramount task of the deacon.

Churches located in large metropolitan areas may be surrounded by poverty. The church may be in a changing neighborhood with two or more ethnic communities moving toward control. Because of a poorly conceived deaconship the opportunities to minister in such a community are overlooked. The deacons can build bridges to the community at large. Some congregations have been blessed by establishing "head-start" classes for ethnic children. Family clinics to instruct people in the productive use of their money would be a help. If language is a problem, provide translators and services for people with little or no knowledge of English. Help them find jobs, fill out alien papers and offer classes to teach them English. Practical ministries of this kind in the poor community will open doors for the gospel.

It is not unusual for families within the church to suffer disasters that leave them destitute. The deacons should have at

their disposal money that can be used to relieve the needs of the suffering. Many congregations follow the practice of taking a free-will offering for the deacons' fund at each communion service. Some funds should probably be budgeted for the deacons fund. A loss of job, extended illness, fires, floods, earthquakes and many other conditions come upon both Christian and the non-Christian. The credibility of the church's compassion is established as much by what it does for its own as by what it does for the non-church people.

The Senior Citizen

The twentieth century church has an exciting opportunity of ministry to the elderly. There are more people of retirement age than ever before in our culture. The needs of this group are not always financial. Elderly people need personal attention. Provision should be made for them to participate in group activity. A sizable work force should be assigned to this ministry. Some of the deacons as well as members of the congregation should give this ministry their attention.

Elderly people who are shut-in and unable to attend church should not be left out of the life and activity of the church. Deacons could visit them on a regular basis and teach them the Sunday school lesson. Every church needs a home department for these people in its Sunday school. When the line of communications are kept open these people can make a contribution to the church. Some might be able from their wheel chair or bed to use a telephone. A part of the church's telephone prayer chain could be given them to make contacts when special prayer requests are being circulated. Find something meaningful for them to do. They should be given a church bulletin each week and a set of offering envelopes. In one church pastored by the author two of the biggest contributors to foreign missions were shut-ins past seventy years of age. With a little effort the home department could be ministering to a hundred people. They and their families would know that the church cares.

Ministry to the Sick

The ministry of the deacons to the sick is an ancient tradition.

While the elders are delegated to the ministry of healing, the deacons have the practical care of the sick. How helpful to a family with the mother hospitalized to have the evening meal prepared and brought to the home. What a relief to the husband and father to have a baby sitting service for his pre-school age children while he visits the hospital. What wife would not be comforted by the fact that the deacons cared for the lawn while her husband was hospitalized or perhaps they finished an incompleated paint job. The ministry of compassion to the sick and their families must go beyond a card and some flowers. Changing off nights with a weary spouse at the bedside of a seriously sick husband or wife would help so much to lift their load of care.

Hospitality

The *diaconate* has a ministry of hospitality. The need for entertaining fellow Christians when they traveled was necessary in the ancient church. Public inns and taverns were not available to Christians so the saints opened their homes for this purpose. Modern believers do not have this problem. Motels and hotels are everywhere, with food service and just about any service needed by the traveler. But though the culture has changed, the need for hospitality has not changed. What an exciting ministry a deacon and his family could enjoy by opening their home to overseas missionaries arriving at an airport near their location. Providing overnight lodging, meals, and transportation for the missionary family would be a wonderful expression of the love of Christ in terms of true hospitality.

What about the many new families that visit the church in the course of a month. Each of them could be invited to a home for Sunday dinner. This kind of hospitality would demonstrate the real concern of the church for people and not just statistics.

The deacons might be assigned to oversee the ushers since ushering is a form of hospitality. The initial impression of visitors to the church are often formed by the conduct of the ushers. While the deacons probably cannot assume this task themselves because of their work load, they could be in charge of recruiting, training and overseeing the ushers.

The deacons, deaconesses, and their families are not per-

sonally responsible to care for all of the hospitality needs of the church. They should set a good example by their own participation in this ministry, but they must unite all the members in doing the work of entertaining strangers.

The Deacons and the Ordinances

The elders are usually in charge of the spiritual ministries of the church and assist the pastor with the preparation of candidates for baptism and in the distribution of the Lord's Supper. Traditionally the deacons have also related to both of these ordinances. The provision and maintenance of the equipment necessary for baptism is often the work of the deacons. Deaconesses are usually responsible for maintaining and laundering the baptismal robes. The deacons can be enlisted to assist the men at the baptismal service while the deaconesses assist the women. It is helpful to have one of the deacons standing by the baptistry or standing by the pastor in the baptistry to assist him in the event of any difficulty. Good organization and proper planning can make the mechanics of the service something worthy of its high spiritual meaning.

Another humble but beautiful service for deacons and deaconesses is the care of the communion ware. Maintaining a fresh supply of unleavened bread and the grape juice is essential. Washing and storing the communion ware after each service and laundering the linens can be done for the glory of God. A practical system for this responsibility is to assign a deacon and his wife to care for the communion preparation each quarter of the year. One of the deacons should be put in charge of instructing the communion custodians as to their responsibility and the proper procedure. Data should be given them as to the number of portions to prepare. How many reserve portions should there be for unexpected guests or a larger than usual attendance of members. They should also be instructed as to setting the table. The deacon in charge of communion custodians should confer regularly with the pastor as to any necessary change in procedure.

In some churches the elders on a regular basis ask the deacons to assist them in the distribution of the elements at the communion service. It is also helpful for deacons to assist the pastor

and the elders in serving communion to the shut-ins and the sick.

Stewardship

The finances of the local church are a part of the broad concerns of the deacons. The distribution of the benevolences of the church is only the beginning of their concern with finances. The deacon board is the ideal agency of the local church structure to promote stewardship. The average evangelical church fails to train its membership in the Christ-like use of their money. The proper management of money and material resources is a Christian's duty. Stewardship, a necessary discipline for the godly, is a form of service to Christ. Either the believer learns to control his money or his money will control him.

Christians need basic instructions about the stewardship of time, talents, possessions, and money. If every Christian were to obey the Spirit in this regard there would be no financial lack in the ministries of the church. Out of the abundance flows money to finance the overseas outreach and all the supporting institutions at home. The deacons should be knowledgeable in what the Bible teaches on this subject, and conducting classes for the membership. They should distribute sound literature on tithing and all forms of giving. A strong *diaconate* might comprise the finance committee for the congregation.

The deacons may discover some of their members are able to give wise counsel regarding the Christian use of money. Families with extremely difficult financial problems could be counseled by understanding members of the deacon board. Such assistance can revolutionize a family. The right use of their money would not only give them the joy of sharing with Christ but it would greatly improve their living conditions.

Ministry to Special Community Needs

The jails, prisons, and other corrective institutions should not be overlooked by the local church in its compassionate outreach to the community. In most communities it is possible for responsible church representatives to minister to the prisons.

Regular services, Bible classes, and literature brings light and blessing within the bleak walls of these institutions. The deacons provide the logical leadership for such a program. Some deacons may have a burden for this work and show evidence that the Holy Spirit has gifted them to reach the hearts of prisoners. From this leadership a team may be selected to cover the penal institutions in the area.

The deacons' ministry goes beyond contact with the prisoners. The families of the prisoners have great needs which are often neglected by both the community and the church. The deacons and the deaconesses will find it most rewarding to minister to prisoners and their families.

The Deacons and Minorities or Ethnic

The influx of new immigrants and refugees plus the black population and aboriginals make the United States and Canada a veritable mosaic of diverse people. The life of the church in today's world is deeply touched by the realities of such pluralism. The rate of neighborhood change is sometimes so rapid as to leave a congregation in ruin and frustration. Some of this could be avoided if the church would keep constant surveillance of its community and react in love to the changes that take place. When new people come into a neighborhood whose language, race, and culture are different from the old residents, some serious effort to build bridges to these new people must come from the church. It should be remembered that the first deacons were appointed in response to tension between two different culture groups, the Hellenistic Jews and the Aramaic-speaking Jews. Modern deacons are called to deal with the same tensions. If the community requires it, some deacons should be assigned to the task of communicating the love of Christ to new neighbors.

In 1970, the Home Missions Board of the Christian Reformed Church called a conference of selected pastors and laymen to discuss the church's mission in today's world. A book containing the papers of that conference was published with the title, *Who in the World?* It speaks in everyday language about the church's ministry to the non-Christian community. It consistently takes the reader back to the New Testament church to

demonstrate the fact that the early church had discovered the forms and methods of effective ministry in the world. The *diaconate* is singled out as an example of a New Testament office that is relevant for now.

“The *diaconate*, then, is the organizational way of accepting from Jesus His sign of the towel, the symbol of servanthood. But two things have to be remembered here: First, the whole church is a *diaconate*. For practical reasons, some of the servant’s task is done by deacons. But Jesus’ whole life was spent in service, and this is what He asks of all who follow Him. *Diaconate* spells out the whole character, the full spirit, and the great purpose of the church’s mission in the world. The body of Christ is not a loose body of separated functions. The whole body is involved in the service. And the official deacons have the right to tap the talents and resources of every member. For we are all limbs of one body.”¹

Never in the long history of the church has the office of deacon been so necessary. Never has it had such broad opportunities of ministry. The modern deacon is a model of servanthood to the congregation. He is a leader in that he discovers and motivates into action the latent abilities in the congregation. The deacon is the church’s best liason to the non-Christian community.

¹ Clifford Christians, Earl Schipper, Wesley Smeder, *Who in the World?*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1972, p. 134.

Spiritual Gifts for Elders and Deacons

The New Testament speaks of leaders that are gifted by the Holy Spirit for ministry. The term gift is used to translate the Greek word *charismata*. *Charismata* is related to the Greek word for grace and speaks of divinely imparted ability to minister. Therefore, this kind of leadership is called *charismatic* leadership in theological treatments of the subject. (This term should not be confused with today’s popular use of the term charismatic as it refers to the neo-Pentecostal movement.) Some church renewal writers and some church historians have insisted that the church in its purest days, the days of the apostles, knew only a charismatic leadership. The argument continues that office-bearing positions of leadership became prominent as the charismatic leadership phased out. The difficulty with that position is readily seen upon examining the New Testament record. The office-bearing elders and deacons emerged early in the experience of the church and existed along side the charismatic leadership. In fact, spiritual gifts were necessary to the office-bearing leaders so that no noticeable dichotomy existed between office-bearing leaders and charismatic leaders in the first century church. The leadership of the early church was one as should be the leadership of the modern church. Elders and deacons on occasion exercised the gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11. Elders functioned in pastoral care roles and as teachers. Phillip, one of the deacons of the Jerusalem church, was greatly used of God as an evangelist and a church planter.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are not religious playthings but rich provisions of His grace for the purpose of ministry. Ministry is synonymous with service. The only proper use of gifts is to glorify Jesus Christ by serving Him. That explains Peter’s reference to the exercise of gifts as stewardship (1 Pet. 4:10). Be-

will also serve the practicing preacher whose background in homiletics is spotty or out-of-date, or whose preaching needs strengthening in some specific area.

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I. WHAT IS LIBERATION THEOLOGY?

The North American theological scene has a tendency to latch on to key words and phrases, as if their use were proof that one is up to date. A few years ago it was "secularity." Later it was the "death of God." Today it is "liberation." Preachers of all shades of opinion speak of liberation. Every ecclesiastical assembly seems to feel compelled to include it in its pronouncements. It would seem that one cannot go wrong as long as one is for "liberation."

But words, like coins, lose their sharpness when they are overused. At that point, all sorts of counterfeits are possible. This became clear when the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America was preparing for the Bishops' Conference which took place in Puebla in 1979. At that point, many of the most belligerent opponents of liberation theology employed the strategy of coopting the term "liberation" and interpreting it in their own conservative fashion.¹ Therefore, before we proceed to deal with the subject of liberation preaching, we must clarify what is meant in this context by "liberation theology."

POWER AND POWERLESSNESS: A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

When we speak here of "liberation theology," we are referring to theology done from the perspective of those who have been traditionally powerless in society and voiceless in the church. In the United States, this means blacks, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and

others. In Latin America, Asia, and Africa, it means those who have long been the subjects of colonialism, economic and political as well as ecclesiastical. In societies which worship youth, it means the aged. All over the world, it means women.

There is a growing number of people in these groups who have rejected the self-image imposed on them. If one takes as an example the case of international colonialism, it has been shown that the colonizers need to justify their enterprise by developing a theory of their cultural superiority, and selling that view to the colonized. For a while, overwhelmed by the power of the colonizers, generations of the colonized may believe what they are told about themselves—their lack of responsibility and organizational skills, their emotionalism, their lack of cultural creativity, etc. But eventually, through a process which takes different shapes in various situations, they come to the realization that they do not have to accept the self-image which has been imposed on them by the colonizers.² This process, which has spelled the death of the international colonial empires of the nineteenth century, is also taking place in societies such as ours among those who have been those societies' internal colonies—blacks, chicanos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and women. It is on the toil of such people, and of the colonized overseas, that the great wealth of the North Atlantic has been built. And yet those people receive the smallest share of that wealth. Therefore, the change in self-image on their part is not a purely psychological or internal matter, but one which demands basic structural changes in the ordering of our society.

Not all people who have come to this awareness belong to the church. Many have left it because they perceive it as part of the structure of oppression against which they must rebel. And we must admit that such a view is amply justified, when we remember how Christianity was used to take land from Native Americans and then from Mexicans, how it justified slavery, how few Christian leaders protested against the internment of Japanese Americans during the Second World War, and how the Bible has been used to keep women in a subservient role. At the same time, there are many members of these groups who, out of their Christian faith, refuse to join the movement toward a new self-image or to demand their

rights. Many have been taught that it is unchristian to rock the boat or that if they are humble here on earth they will be rewarded in heaven or that they should be content to be of service to others and not claim positions of leadership.

Therefore, not all those who are involved in the various liberation movements can be called liberation *theologians*, for many have rejected all Christian theology as oppressive. Likewise, not all members of these groups who do theology can be called *liberation theologians*, for many simply repeat and reflect what they have been taught by others.

Liberation theology is that done from the perspective of the traditionally powerless as they experience the empowerment of the gospel, not only in an inner sense, but also in the sense that it compels and enables them to strive for justice. In rejecting the traditional interpretation of the Christian message, they refuse to leave the gospel in the hands of the powerful, to be used for their purposes, and insist that a proper interpretation of Scripture is freeing rather than oppressive.

This is not to say that the powerful have deliberately set out to interpret the Bible in an oppressive way. The truth is much more subtle than that. What actually takes place is an unconscious process through which the values, goals, and interests of those in power are read into Scripture.

Take for instance what happened in the early centuries of the Christian church. At first, most Christians belonged to the lower classes. Their opponents said that they were uncouth and unlearned, and that their teaching made no sense. A great deal of the Christian literature of the first four centuries seeks to respond to that challenge by showing that Christianity agrees with the best of Greek philosophy and Roman law. As an effort to communicate the gospel to those outside the church, this response is quite understandable. But what eventually took place was that Christians themselves began to think that Greek philosophy and Roman law spoke a clearer word about God and the divine purposes than did the Bible itself. By the time Constantine came to power, in the early fourth century, and he and his successors embraced Christianity, it was possible to do so without rejecting many of the values of the "best" Graeco-Roman society.

The conversion of Constantine, and the support which most of his successors gave to the church, accelerated the process. Eusebius of Caesarea wrote a *Church History* which made it appear that the only reasons why the empire had persecuted the church were grave misunderstandings and the maliciousness of some rulers—when in fact many of those who led the worst persecutions were among the ablest statesmen and most just rulers who ever governed the empire. The book of Revelation, which spoke of Rome in rather uncomplimentary fashion, was shunned, and Eusebius himself had doubts about its inclusion in the canon of the New Testament.³ The ritual of Christian worship began to imitate the formalities of the imperial court, with all their distinctions between various levels in the civil hierarchy. Christ was depicted as sitting on a heavenly throne, in a posture which resembled that of the emperors on their thrones. Even the cross was often studded with precious gems. Anything to obscure the fact that the One whom the church worshiped was a poor carpenter from Galilee, who had been condemned to death as an outlaw by Roman authorities.

Again, this was not a conscious process. Indeed, when one reads the documents of the time one comes across repeated protestations that what is being taught and done in the church is exactly what the apostles taught and did. The "faith of the fathers" became the watchword of orthodoxy. But the "fathers" were for the most part seen as bishops who sat on thrones, very much like the Emperor in Constantinople and the images of Christ in heaven.

There were protests against this. The Donatists broke away from the church and eventually were put down by sheer military force. At another level, the development of monasticism was also a sort of protest. Since the church had embraced the values of the surrounding society, these women and men (in Egypt there seem to have been twice as many female monastics as there were male) felt that the best way for them to reject those values was to live in seclusion, preferably in the desert. This feeling was so widespread that soon travelers said that the desert was as populated as a city. Others, while embracing the monastic attitude toward the prevailing values of society, continued their active involvement in the life of the church and often collided with the powerful. These were the great

saints of the fourth and fifth centuries: Athanasius, Ambrose, Jerome, Macrina, Basil, John Chrysostom, etc. Many of these we shall have occasion to quote later on, when we deal with the resources for liberation preaching from the early Christian tradition.

The usually unconscious process of adapting Christian teaching to the views and interests of the powerful did not end with Constantine and his successors. It has continued, for instance, in the manner in which the oppression and persecution of Jews has received religious and theological sanction. In the history of the Western Hemisphere it has appeared again and again in the taking of the land from its original inhabitants, in the destruction of ancient civilizations, in the annexation of Mexican territories by the U.S., in black slavery on both continents, etc., etc.

This oppressive use of supposedly Christian doctrine has repeatedly been pointed out. However, what we often fail to realize is that most of the people who did this were sincere in their beliefs. It is not that they consciously decided to interpret the Bible in such a way that it supported exploitation. It is rather that, from their perspective, a different interpretation was highly unlikely. And, since their views were reflected in the centers of authority within the church, their interpretation became normative and was passed on as authoritative, not only to later generations among the powerful, but also to the powerless, who were left with the alternative of either acquiescing to exploitation or rejecting Christianity.

What is happening with the birth of liberation theologies is that many among the traditionally powerless are asking the basic question of whether or not the manner in which the Bible has been interpreted by the powerful is accurate. This is the "ideological suspicion" of which we shall have much more to say later on. Could it not be that a biblical interpretation, so to speak, "from below" would uncover dimensions of the biblical message that have often been ignored?

THE MAIN BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Many have argued that an interpretation of the Bible done by the powerless would be no less biased and determined by self-interest

than is the current one done by the powerful. Why trade one such interpretation for another? Nothing would really be gained. The response of liberation theologians is clear at this point and needs to be understood before any real progress can be made in the appreciation of liberation theology for preaching. It has to do with the perspective of the Bible itself.

If the major portion of the Bible is written by those who, in their own social situation, are the powerless and oppressed, if it is their perspective on the activity of God that is given us by Scripture, then surely a more accurate interpretation of the biblical word can be gained by those who currently stand in a parallel place in our own societies than by those who are powerful. This response needs to be looked at in some detail.

First of all, is it true that most of the Bible is written from the perspective of the powerless? Surely this is the case. The people of Israel begin their organized life as a band of runaway slaves, escaping the oppression of Pharaoh. Even the Promised Land they finally attain is an insecure piece of geography, at the crossroads of trade routes and constantly a battleground for the mighty empires that surround Israel. The only times Israel has a semblance of independent national life is in brief periods when these empires—Egypt to the west, or whatever is the current name of the peoples to the northeast in the great Mesopotamian and Persian area, and finally Macedonia, Syria, and Rome—are in disarray internally and cannot exercise their usual demand for tribute or subservience.

Almost perversely, God chose a people weak and small in number in preference to the mighty nations of the earth (Deut. 7:7). Part of the reason for this is that Israel could then be clear that the power is God's power, and not Israel's own strength (Deut. 8:1-20). In grateful response to God, Israel ought then to be obedient to God's will as expressed in the law. Relying on her own strength, which was tempting whenever the nation seemed to be strong and independent, inevitably brought about faithlessness and disobedience, which God then punished and cured by removing Israel's apparent power.

The slaves escaping from Egypt surely had a different perspective on God's activity and character than did their Egyptian pursuers. The kings of Israel often forgot the Law when the nation was strong

and prosperous. Even mighty David was rebuked by Nathan the prophet (II Sam. 12:1-15). David's greatness was seen in his response to the rebuke, in his hearing of the Word of God to him from the prophet. Other kings did not listen so well. King Jeroboam much preferred to listen to his own court priests who told him what he wished to hear than to Amos, the rough shepherd from out of town, who brought God's authentic word to him (Amos 7:10-17).

This is the pattern throughout much of the Old Testament. The powerful nations are overthrown by small Israel when Israel is obedient. The powerful within Israel are rebuked by the seemingly powerless prophets. What is astonishing is that the Old Testament records all of this. The Old Testament is not only our sacred Scripture. It is also a national history. Such histories normally glorify the nation. All difficulties are due to evil enemies, never to sinfulness within the nation itself. National heroes are models of perfection and their weaknesses overlooked. That is the general plan of secular national histories. But the Old Testament is quite different, and in this difference is seen the revelation of God. The official records are included, but the minority report of the prophets is even more in evidence. What has been preserved by Israel is the perspective of the powerless over against the viewpoint of the powerful. Included also are the repentant powerful who have learned through their own bitter experience that God is the defender of the poor and oppressed and not the supporter of the unjust, whether they be kings or nations.

Yet this does not mean that God prefers those who maintain a low opinion of themselves. Too often humility has been interpreted in this manner. Rather, God seems to choose those who have been made to feel like outcasts, those who are powerless and marginal, and then gives them a new sense of self-worth. God vindicates them in the eyes of their former oppressors. This theme of vindication of the powerless is a constant one in the Old Testament (see especially I Sam. 2:1-10). It is to be contrasted with the sinful arrogance of the powerful who believe themselves secure in their own strength (see Ps. 73). Humility and weakness alone are not enough for faithfulness. In the Old Testament, faithful humility is combined in the powerless with the belief that God will indeed be their strength

and that they can therefore hold their heads up very high, especially in the face of their oppressors.

In the New Testament, we are not dealing with a national history, but rather with that of an emerging institution. Yet the same pattern continues. Those who hear the gospel gladly are by and large not the powerful within the society of Israel. Rather, they are the fisherfolk, the women, the poor, and those who are marginalized because of their occupations: the tax collectors and the harlots.

The early church, as it moved into Gentile circles, continued to attract those who were unimportant and even powerless, rather than the elite among the Greeks (1 Cor. 1:26-31). Yet there were some exceptions. Within Judaism, and within the New Testament, Paul is the major one who comes from the situation of the powerful. He was clearly among the educated and respected within Judaism (Phil. 3:4-6). We know also that Paul was a Roman citizen, which gave him status within the empire itself. Paul can be classified among the "repentant powerful," rather like King David. For him, believing in this "nobody" Jesus meant joining a group that was totally unlike his own insecure social position. He joined by deciding that the future lay with this marginal group and not with the trimmings of prestige and power to which he had been accustomed (Phil. 3:7-9).

Simon Magus is another example of a powerful person who becomes a Christian. But it takes the fisherman, Simon Peter, to make clear to him that his understanding of the faith is very faulty. Simon Magus evidently then repents and hears the gospel authentically (Acts 8:9-24), but the New Testament does not give us any glimpse into his life after this encounter, such as we are given into the life of Paul.

The New Testament, just as the Old, shows the people of God with all of their faults. We are not presented with an ideal group of perfect people. It is precisely the weakness of the people that allows the surpassing power of God to be seen. And when the people are faithful to such a God, these weak ones are filled with a power that astonishes even the powerful outside the church.

The supreme example of this is, of course, Jesus himself. In terms of worldly power and prestige, surely he was an outsider. Born in a

stable while his parents were being moved around by an alien government; the child of poor parents, he grew up in an obscure village where the mighty need not pay any attention to him! And yet, in this One, God was incarnate. It would have made more sense for the divine incarnation to be in the form of a king or a priest, or at least one of the elite of Jerusalem. Yet God the Son chose the form of a servant (Phil. 2:6-8), one of the powerless ones, even as God had chosen Israel, a weak nation. The cross shows the culmination of such a life, with all of its weakness and marginality. The resurrection shows the vindication by God in the most radical form.

God has a proclivity for speaking the word through the powerless. The whole Bible bears witness to this. Is this an accident, or is it an essential element of the gospel itself? Is there something about God's word that can best be heard and spoken by the powerless? Liberation theology would say there is indeed. And in this it is supported by the words of Jesus: "I thank thee, Father, . . . that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes" (Luke 10:21). The powerful have a difficult time hearing God accurately. Their choice seems to be hearing God's word to them through some apparently powerless person—Nathan, Amos, Simon Peter, Jesus—or not hearing it at all. Such theology would say also that in our own day, this pattern continues. The powerless have readier access to an authentic understanding of the gospel than do the powerful. The powerful need to hear the word through voices they have rejected in their own society. Liberation theology is an understanding of the gospel arising precisely in the midst of such traditionally rejected voices.

SOME BASIC TRAITS AND THEMES

Since the theologies of liberation coming out of diverse groups and situations reflect the concreteness of the struggle in which they are involved, there is no such thing as a "general" or "universal" theology of liberation. And yet, there are some common traits.

The first of these is that all theologies of liberation are politically concrete. They do not seek to be universal, for they know by bitter experience that what is usually called "universal" is too often the

projection of the values, self-image, and interest of a powerful group. In a white racist society an "average" human being is depicted as white. In a sexist society, male domination seems normal, and males take for granted that the fruit of their philosophical and theological reflection has nothing to do with their gender or position of dominance.

This emphasis on concreteness and particularity appears in the various theologies of liberation. Mexican theologian Raúl Viales has said that "There has never been a 'universal' theology, and even less has there existed a neutral one."⁴ Likewise, James H. Cone states that "Black theologians must work in such a way as to destroy the corruptive influence of white thought by building theology on the sources and norms that are appropriate to the black community."⁵ Therefore, although there are many points of contact, and certainly a common perspective, joining the various theologies of liberation, it is important to keep in mind this emphasis on concreteness, in order to avoid the temptation of becoming a preacher of a universal liberation theology or of someone else's liberation—which is what easily happens when some white males decide to preach liberation.

A second common characteristic of liberation theologies is that the main category with which they work is that of history. A significant segment of traditional theology deals with truth, understood in terms of changelessness and universality. Others seem to believe that the basic category of the biblical message is that of law, doing what is proper and orderly. But liberation theologians know that supposedly "universal" truth is too often the projection of the particular views and interests of the powerful, that changelessness is a value espoused by those who benefit from the status quo, for whom change would be threatening, and that law is most cherished by those who have the civil law and order on their side. As we read the Bible, what we see in it is not so much a book of eternal truths, nor a book of rules, as a book of history. In the Bible, truth is not something that "is," in the sense in which Parmenides used that word, but rather something that happens. And laws are given, not to stifle that happening, but to foster it. This is why Cone says that "In the Bible revelation is inseparable from history and faith. History is the arena in which God's revelation takes place."⁶ And Letty M.

Russell speaks both for feminist theology and for other theologies of liberation when she asserts that "Most liberation theologies are written from the modern point of view that both humanity and the world are to be understood as historical, as both changing and changeable."⁷

This understanding of history, however, has to be clarified. History is not simply the narration of past events. History is a project, both divine and human, for the redemption of God's creation. "If theology is really to speak meaningfully about the mediating point between the 'is' and the 'ought' of human life," says a feminist theologian, "then it takes as its base the entire human project."⁸ And Gustavo Gutiérrez: "Indeed, if human history is above all else an opening to the future, then it is a task, a political occupation, through which man orients and opens himself to the gift which gives history its transcendent meaning: the full and definitive encounter with the Lord and with other men."⁹ James Cone agrees: "By making revelation a historical happening, the Bible makes faith something other than an ecstatic feeling in moments of silent prayer, or an acceptance of inerrant propositions. Faith is the community's response to God's act of liberation. It is saying Yes to God and No to oppressors."¹⁰

A third common characteristic of liberation theologies might appear at first glance to be at odds with what has just been said. Liberation theology refuses to limit itself to the themes most directly and obviously connected with its struggles. This is one of its most puzzling characteristics for those who look at it from the outside. Liberation theology is not a theology *about* liberation which is then content to leave all the other theological themes to traditional theology. On the contrary, it is convinced that its insights have a bearing on every single doctrine of the Christian faith, and that it is therefore a legitimate theology. "Feminist theology is not about women. It is about God."¹¹ And "when black people sing, preach, and tell stories about their struggle, one fact is clear: they are not dealing simply with themselves. . . . It is this affirmation of transcendence that prevents Black Theology from being reduced merely to the cultural history of the black people."¹²

For this reason, liberation theology deals with every theme in

Christian theology, from the doctrine of God to that of the last things.¹³ But it deals with each and all of these themes from the perspective of its particular struggle and action—what some liberation theologians call “praxis.”

It is obviously impossible to discuss here all the themes with which liberation theology deals. But in order to illustrate them, we shall deal very briefly with three of them: the doctrine of God, anthropology, and eschatology.

All liberation theologians are agreed that the God of the Bible is not the impassible, ineffable, immutable One of so much of traditional theology. Involved in their particular struggles as they are, they experience faith in a God who is active, who is involved with them in the struggle. This is the meaning that they see in the biblical phrase, “the living God”—a meaning which is amply supported by the incarnation of God in Christ. Out of that *praxis*, of that faith in action, they reflect both on the God of Scripture and the God of traditional theology and come to the conclusion that the impassible and ineffable One, far from being a better way to speak about the God of Scripture, is an idol. It is an idol of changelessness developed, albeit unwittingly, by those who are threatened by change, because the present order works in their favor. Liberation theologians can then point out that the philosophers who inspired this understanding of the Godhead were the same who boasted that philosophy was “the occupation of the idle,” which obviously means those who, because of their social standing, do not have to work and do not wish to see that situation change. It is therefore not surprising that such philosophers produced, and bequeathed to later generations, a view of perfection as changelessness, and of change as that which threatens the very notion of perfection. In general, theologians who have followed the lead of such philosophers have been in similar social circumstances.

The fact that God is active also means that God is *not* neutral. This is the point which many find most disconcerting in liberation theology. They would prefer to speak of a God who deals with all in the same manner, like the blindfolded justice standing in front of our courthouses is supposed to do (although she appears to hear the sound of money and somehow seems to see people's color in spite of

her blindfold!). But liberation theologians tell us that God did not deal equally with Pharaoh and with the children of Israel. God's justice is equalizing, because it is unequal. James Cone has said this in startling words: “Black theology cannot accept a view of God which does not represent him as being for blacks and thus against whites. Living in a world of white oppressors, black people have no time for a neutral God.”¹⁴

God judges “for the meek of the earth” (Isa. 11:4 emphasis added). It is this God, very different from the idol of our society, that liberation theologians discover in the midst of their struggle and in their theological reflection on that struggle.

If we then turn to anthropology, liberation theology rejects the notion that God is best served by our self-abasement. Too often has the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith been presented in such a manner. It is significant that many of those who tell us that humility is the greatest virtue, or that the root of all sin is pride, are doing so from prestigious pulpits and endowed chairs. The tone of the Bible is very different. There the beauty of creation is used to exalt God, and the human creature is seen as the crown of that creation (Ps. 8). Nowhere does the Bible tell us that we are called to be nothing. Rather, we are told that we are made after the divine image, that we are heirs of the Kingdom, children of God, priests and royalty. Any supposed humility that denies this is sinful, for it rejects the divine plan for creation. And yet, traditional theology has often been bent on promoting the virtue of humility, particularly since those who are humble will stay in their place and refuse to claim their rightful status in human societies as children and heirs of God.

Also, still in the realm of anthropology, liberation theologians are asking why is it that in so much preaching and teaching in the church “sin” is usually equated with an inner attitude, or at best with private misdeeds, and so seldom with the sort of sin most often condemned in the Bible, of “those who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no more room” (Isa. 5:8). Why is it that our society, partly through the influence of Christian preaching, has practically come to equate sin with sexual disorders, while ignoring social injustice?¹⁵ Could it not be that once again, and quite unwittingly, Christian theology has been serving the interests of the powerful?

Finally, when it comes to questions of eschatology, liberation theologies are showing that the understanding of "salvation" which has been bequeathed to us is rather truncated. The Bible deals much more with the kingdom of God and the Holy City, than with individual life after death. Life after death is part of the biblical message; however, in Scripture eternal life is usually placed within the context of a new social order. The Kingdom is not so much a place where all will be floating around in the presence of God, as a new order in which "they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid" (Mic. 4:4). It is within that new order, the Kingdom, that eternal life takes place. Eternal life does not consist in being plucked out of history, but in being a participant in its culmination. In the present life, therefore, our task is to move toward that new order, to work for it, to announce it, and to train for it.

Again, this understanding of the goal of history has not been popular among the powerful because it would subvert the present order. As long as history and eternity are two parallel realms, with little relationship to each other, our task in history is to gain access to eternity—by being meek and accepting. But if history is part of eternity, and its purpose is to move toward the Kingdom, if the goal of history itself is that all shall sit under their own fig trees, it follows that our present system of land tenure must be revised. If salvation is seen as having one's soul go to heaven, those who exploit our bodies may even be seen as helps in that process. But if salvation is moving into a new order, which includes the entire human being, then we must strive against everything which at present denies that order.

Thus, at every point of Christian doctrine, liberation theology asks two basic questions: What does it really mean when we see it from the clearer vantage point of the oppressed? And, what is the hidden agenda in the interpretation which has been handed down to us?

LIBERATION AND THE TRAP OF PATERNALISM

If liberation theology is by definition theology done by those who have traditionally been powerless, how can it be useful to those who, by nationality, gender, race, or economic status, are to be classified

as powerful? Most of the ministers in the main-line churches and most of the members of their congregations would be in that category. Can they appropriate and use such a theology without falsifying it? Can it speak to them as well as to the powerless?

There is great danger in the use of liberation theology by those who are generally thought of as the oppressors rather than the oppressed. It is one thing to find the gospel a liberating word to oneself. It is quite a different thing to believe ourselves agents for the liberation of others from a bondage we have never experienced. We are then in the position of announcing the power of a gospel for which we ourselves have no need in our own lives. Precisely because such agents of liberation have never actually experienced the bondage they now address, it is easy for them to oversimplify the problems and misunderstand the situation, both in its causes and in its cures. This can rapidly lead to frustration, especially if the easily seen cures do not work or are not accepted by those whom the agents seek to help.

Even more to the point, it is difficult to tell the role of "liberating agents" from traditional oppression. Such a role implicitly involves a sense of knowing what is good for the oppressed group, and the feeling that they are unable to advance without us. This role may actually be an unconscious cover for a continuation of earlier domination, though now with a more acceptable, "liberation" rhetoric employed. It involves little change in the underlying structures of power. Needless to say, the various liberation movements are suspicious of such agents. It is a significant thing for a black to help other blacks to be aware of their oppression and to take steps to work against domination by whites. It is significant when a woman helps other women to see and work against the domination of men. But for a white or a man to play the role of liberating agent is another matter entirely. The response of the oppressed group will probably be that the contribution of the traditionally powerful person may be helpful, but only in a supportive role, not in a leadership or even in a diagnostic one. The response may also be that they could be of more use in their own group of whites or of men, working for a change in structures that would alter the distribution of power.

The response of liberation theology to such offers of assistance

from the powerful will probably include the strange idea that part of the uselessness of the powerful is that they are not really very powerful at all. Many white, middle-class liberal Christians in this country readily and constantly feel a sense of guilt for their position of affluence in a world beset by problems of hunger and poverty. Obviously, there is ample reason for such a sense of guilt. Yet often such guilt leads to the conclusion that we are guilty because we voluntarily chose such affluence. We created the problem and we can therefore alter the situation. The feeling of guilt is acceptable to us as long as we can also have the sense that we, unlike the oppressed we wish to help, are free and independent members of society. We can decide to assist those who are downtrodden to help them attain the status we have. It is not so pleasant to think of ourselves as both guilty and powerless. The thought that the vast majority of us who see ourselves as free are really the captives of the same structures and forces that cause the poverty we wish to eliminate is difficult to accommodate. Yet this thought is essential if we are to see how liberation theology can relate to our preaching and to many of our churches.

This is not the same as to say that we are all oppressed in one way or another and thus we can be rid of our sense of guilt. That will not do at all, though such an attitude often occurs when we discover our own powerlessness. Nor is it legitimate to spiritualize the meaning of bondage and say that some of us are captives of poverty and others of sin, but ultimately we are all in the same situation. This would imply that we need not deal with our role as oppressors at all, since ultimately all are oppressed. The reality of racism and colonialism, and the evils of injustice must be dealt with. The sense of guilt on the consciences of the comfortable must be nurtured and not assuaged.

Yet the truth remains. We are not the free people we often think we are. The bondage under which we live is subtle, and we are sufficiently rewarded that we do not notice our lack of freedom. The structures that buy or lease land in the Third World and displace people, causing them to become part of the inhuman slums of the sprawling cities, are the same structures that govern much of our lives as well. From products to pricing, from values to self-images, from advertising to television programming, our lives and those of

our children are determined in ways that would startle our great-grandparents. If we try to alter things we discover that even regulatory agencies and government itself are strongly influenced by these same interests. Change is neither easy nor always possible. Our own employment may well be governed or at least financed by the same systems, and if we cry out too loudly, we are made aware that it is not wise.

What does all of this have to do with liberation theology? If we take it seriously, it has a great deal. If we can become aware of the social, political, and economic systems that control our lives, we may then find ourselves on the same side of the struggle as those who are the outcasts of those systems. We can then speak from our own experience of bondage and of the problems and frustrations in seeking to be free. We can know what it means to come to consciousness about our own exploitation, even though we fully recognize that our bondage has been quite comfortable. Only then can we really seek to be free.¹⁶ We can find ourselves learning about such struggles from those whom we charitably tried to help before. They can become our teachers, rather than we theirs. The poor, precisely because they are at the margins of the system, may well know more about its actual working than we who are kept within it. Within the church there is great possibility for such a conversation because the church has within its membership all races, economic groups, and social conditions, and is spread over the face of the earth. Yet our local congregations fail to take constant advantage of this truly catholic character of the church and, in their own congregational life, fail to reflect it.

Liberation theology is significant for us when we seek to become free from actual oppressive structures that bind us. Wherever we, who think ourselves powerful, find that we are, indeed, bound, such a theology can inspire us to have the courage to challenge and to act as the redeemed children of God, as those who are indeed not conformed to this world.

For most of us in this country, liberation theology, to be useful and authentic, demands a kind of double personality. Our consciences must continue to remind us of evil from which we benefit while others suffer. Our awareness of this must increase and

not decrease. Our affluence, even though it hardly seems that in comparison to richer neighbors, still is more than our share of the world's resources. Besides this, however, most of us find ourselves in multiple roles. We are the powerful by race if we are white, yet among the powerless if we are women. We are part of a powerless group if we are in an ethnic minority, yet if we are well educated and employed, we join the powerful in that category. Even within the family structure, the child is often the last victim of those who have no one else over whom to rule and yet are oppressed themselves. Our tendency is to claim only one part of our identity, to think of ourselves always as part of an oppressed group or to think of ourselves always as the powerful. A much more creative dynamic is possible when we claim both parts of our identity, and the liberation given by the gospel can nurture a constant interior dialogue within our own lives. It can also open our lives to a far greater dialogue in the world around us. Then liberation theology can speak to us and to our congregations, making clear and judging our roles as oppressors, but also making clear and freeing us from whatever powers bind us, even those forces that bind us into the role of oppressors in the wider society.

II. DIFFICULTIES IN HEARING THE TEXT

Since the main task of the preacher of liberation is to listen anew to the biblical text, this chapter and the next two will deal with the question of biblical interpretation. In the present chapter, we shall discuss some of the obstacles which impede a liberating interpretation, and in the others we shall deal with some resources for overcoming those obstacles.

SOLA SCRIPTURA

One of the main principles of the Protestant Reformation was that of *sola Scriptura*—the sole authority of Scripture in questions of faith. The Reformers themselves did not agree on the scope and application of that principle. Some, like Luther, meant by it that anything which was contrary to the clear words of Scripture should be rejected, while traditions that did not contradict the Bible could—and normally should—be retained. Zwingli and others went much farther and sought to do away with anything that was not clearly supported by Scripture. But in spite of these differences, all agreed that the reason why the Reformation was needed was that, to a greater or lesser degree, the tradition of the church made it difficult, if not impossible, to read the Bible correctly. Thus, in a sense, the Reformation of the sixteenth

will also serve the practicing preacher whose background in homiletics is spotty or out-of-date, or whose preaching needs strengthening in some specific area.

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I. WHAT IS LIBERATION THEOLOGY?

The North American theological scene has a tendency to latch on to key words and phrases, as if their use were proof that one is up to date. A few years ago it was "secularity." Later it was the "death of God." Today it is "liberation." Preachers of all shades of opinion speak of liberation. Every ecclesiastical assembly seems to feel compelled to include it in its pronouncements. It would seem that one cannot go wrong as long as one is for "liberation."

But words, like coins, lose their sharpness when they are overused. At that point, all sorts of counterfeits are possible. This became clear when the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America was preparing for the Bishops' Conference which took place in Puebla in 1979. At that point, many of the most belligerent opponents of liberation theology employed the strategy of coopting the term "liberation" and interpreting it in their own conservative fashion.¹ Therefore, before we proceed to deal with the subject of liberation preaching, we must clarify what is meant in this context by "liberation theology."

POWER AND POWERLESSNESS: A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

When we speak here of "liberation theology," we are referring to theology done from the perspective of those who have been traditionally powerless in society and voiceless in the church. In the United States, this means blacks, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and

others. In Latin America, Asia, and Africa, it means those who have long been the subjects of colonialism, economic and political as well as ecclesiastical. In societies which worship youth, it means the aged. All over the world, it means women.

There is a growing number of people in these groups who have rejected the self-image imposed on them. If one takes as an example the case of international colonialism, it has been shown that the colonizers need to justify their enterprise by developing a theory of their cultural superiority, and selling that view to the colonized. For a while, overwhelmed by the power of the colonizers, generations of the colonized may believe what they are told about themselves—their lack of responsibility and organizational skills, their emotionalism, their lack of cultural creativity, etc. But eventually, through a process which takes different shapes in various situations, they come to the realization that they do not have to accept the self-image which has been imposed on them by the colonizers.² This process, which has spelled the death of the international colonial empires of the nineteenth century, is also taking place in societies such as ours among those who have been those societies' internal colonies—blacks, chicanos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and women. It is on the toil of such people, and of the colonized overseas, that the great wealth of the North Atlantic has been built. And yet those people receive the smallest share of that wealth. Therefore, the change in self-image on their part is not a purely psychological or internal matter, but one which demands basic structural changes in the ordering of our society.

Not all people who have come to this awareness belong to the church. Many have left it because they perceive it as part of the structure of oppression against which they must rebel. And we must admit that such a view is amply justified, when we remember how Christianity was used to take land from Native Americans and then from Mexicans, how it justified slavery, how few Christian leaders protested against the internment of Japanese Americans during the Second World War, and how the Bible has been used to keep women in a subservient role. At the same time, there are many members of these groups who, out of their Christian faith, refuse to join the movement toward a new self-image or to demand their

rights. Many have been taught that it is unchristian to rock the boat or that if they are humble here on earth they will be rewarded in heaven or that they should be content to be of service to others and not claim positions of leadership.

Therefore, not all those who are involved in the various liberation movements can be called liberation *theologians*, for many have rejected all Christian theology as oppressive. Likewise, not all members of these groups who do theology can be called *liberation theologians*, for many simply repeat and reflect what they have been taught by others.

Liberation theology is that done from the perspective of the traditionally powerless as they experience the empowerment of the gospel, not only in an inner sense, but also in the sense that it compels and enables them to strive for justice. In rejecting the traditional interpretation of the Christian message, they refuse to leave the gospel in the hands of the powerful, to be used for their purposes, and insist that a proper interpretation of Scripture is freeing rather than oppressive.

This is not to say that the powerful have deliberately set out to interpret the Bible in an oppressive way. The truth is much more subtle than that. What actually takes place is an unconscious process through which the values, goals, and interests of those in power are read into Scripture.

Take for instance what happened in the early centuries of the Christian church. At first, most Christians belonged to the lower classes. Their opponents said that they were uncouth and unlearned, and that their teaching made no sense. A great deal of the Christian literature of the first four centuries seeks to respond to that challenge by showing that Christianity agrees with the best of Greek philosophy and Roman law. As an effort to communicate the gospel to those outside the church, this response is quite understandable. But what eventually took place was that Christians themselves began to think that Greek philosophy and Roman law spoke a clearer word about God and the divine purposes than did the Bible itself. By the time Constantine came to power, in the early fourth century, and he and his successors embraced Christianity, it was possible to do so without rejecting many of the values of the "best" Graeco-Roman society.

The conversion of Constantine, and the support which most of his successors gave to the church, accelerated the process. Eusebius of Caesarea wrote a *Church History* which made it appear that the only reasons why the empire had persecuted the church were grave misunderstandings and the maliciousness of some rulers—when in fact many of those who led the worst persecutions were among the ablest statesmen and most just rulers who ever governed the empire. The book of Revelation, which spoke of Rome in rather uncomplimentary fashion, was shunned, and Eusebius himself had doubts about its inclusion in the canon of the New Testament.¹ The ritual of Christian worship began to imitate the formalities of the imperial court, with all their distinctions between various levels in the civil hierarchy. Christ was depicted as sitting on a heavenly throne, in a posture which resembled that of the emperors on their thrones. Even the cross was often studded with precious gems. Anything to obscure the fact that the One whom the church worshiped was a poor carpenter from Galilee, who had been condemned to death as an outlaw by Roman authorities.

Again, this was not a conscious process. Indeed, when one reads the documents of the time one comes across repeated protestations that what is being taught and done in the church is exactly what the apostles taught and did. The "faith of the fathers" became the watchword of orthodoxy. But the "fathers" were for the most part seen as bishops who sat on thrones, very much like the Emperor in Constantinople and the images of Christ in heaven.

There were protests against this. The Donatists broke away from the church and eventually were put down by sheer military force. At another level, the development of monasticism was also a sort of protest. Since the church had embraced the values of the surrounding society, these women and men (in Egypt there seem to have been twice as many female monastics as there were male) felt that the best way for them to reject those values was to live in seclusion, preferably in the desert. This feeling was so widespread that soon travelers said that the desert was as populated as a city. Others, while embracing the monastic attitude toward the prevailing values of society, continued their active involvement in the life of the church and often collided with the powerful. These were the great

saints of the fourth and fifth centuries: Athanasius, Ambrose, Jerome, Macrina, Basil, John Chrysostom, etc. Many of these we shall have occasion to quote later on, when we deal with the resources for liberation preaching from the early Christian tradition.

The usually unconscious process of adapting Christian teaching to the views and interests of the powerful did not end with Constantine and his successors. It has continued, for instance, in the manner in which the oppression and persecution of Jews has received religious and theological sanction. In the history of the Western Hemisphere it has appeared again and again in the taking of the land from its original inhabitants, in the destruction of ancient civilizations, in the annexation of Mexican territories by the U.S., in black slavery on both continents, etc., etc.

This oppressive use of supposedly Christian doctrine has repeatedly been pointed out. However, what we often fail to realize is that most of the people who did this were sincere in their beliefs. It is not that they consciously decided to interpret the Bible in such a way that it supported exploitation. It is rather that, from their perspective, a different interpretation was highly unlikely. And, since their views were reflected in the centers of authority within the church, their interpretation became normative and was passed on as authoritative, not only to later generations among the powerful, but also to the powerless, who were left with the alternative of either acquiescing to exploitation or rejecting Christianity.

What is happening with the birth of liberation theologies is that many among the traditionally powerless are asking the basic question of whether or not the manner in which the Bible has been interpreted by the powerful is accurate. This is the "ideological suspicion" of which we shall have much more to say later on. Could it not be that a biblical interpretation, so to speak, "from below" would uncover dimensions of the biblical message that have often been ignored?

THE MAIN BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Many have argued that an interpretation of the Bible done by the powerless would be no less biased and determined by self-interest

than is the current one done by the powerful. Why trade one such interpretation for another? Nothing would really be gained. The response of liberation theologians is clear at this point and needs to be understood before any real progress can be made in the appreciation of liberation theology for preaching. It has to do with the perspective of the Bible itself.

If the major portion of the Bible is written by those who, in their own social situation, are the powerless and oppressed, if it is their perspective on the activity of God that is given us by Scripture, then surely a more accurate interpretation of the biblical word can be gained by those who currently stand in a parallel place in our own societies than by those who are powerful. This response needs to be looked at in some detail.

First of all, is it true that most of the Bible is written from the perspective of the powerless? Surely this is the case. The people of Israel begin their organized life as a band of runaway slaves, escaping the oppression of Pharaoh. Even the Promised Land they finally attain is an insecure piece of geography, at the crossroads of trade routes and constantly a battleground for the mighty empires that surround Israel. The only times Israel has a semblance of independent national life is in brief periods when these empires—Egypt to the west, or whatever is the current name of the peoples to the northeast in the great Mesopotamian and Persian area, and finally Macedonia, Syria, and Rome—are in disarray internally and cannot exercise their usual demand for tribute or subservience.

Almost perversely, God chose a people weak and small in number in preference to the mighty nations of the earth (Deut. 7:7). Part of the reason for this is that Israel could then be clear that the power is God's power, and not Israel's own strength (Deut. 8:1-20). In grateful response to God, Israel ought then to be obedient to God's will as expressed in the law. Relying on her own strength, which was tempting whenever the nation seemed to be strong and independent, inevitably brought about faithlessness and disobedience, which God then punished and cured by removing Israel's apparent power.

The slaves escaping from Egypt surely had a different perspective on God's activity and character than did their Egyptian pursuers. The kings of Israel often forgot the Law when the nation was strong

and prosperous. Even mighty David was rebuked by Nathan the prophet (II Sam. 12:1-15). David's greatness was seen in his response to the rebuke, in his hearing of the Word of God to him from the prophet. Other kings did not listen so well. King Jeroboam much preferred to listen to his own court priests who told him what he wished to hear than to Amos, the rough shepherd from out of town, who brought God's authentic word to him (Amos 7:10-17).

This is the pattern throughout much of the Old Testament. The powerful nations are overthrown by small Israel when Israel is obedient. The powerful within Israel are rebuked by the seemingly powerless prophets. What is astonishing is that the Old Testament records all of this. The Old Testament is not only our sacred Scripture. It is also a national history. Such histories normally glorify the nation. All difficulties are due to evil enemies, never to sinfulness within the nation itself. National heroes are models of perfection and their weaknesses overlooked. That is the general plan of secular national histories. But the Old Testament is quite different, and in this difference is seen the revelation of God. The official records are included, but the minority report of the prophets is even more in evidence. What has been preserved by Israel is the perspective of the powerless over against the viewpoint of the powerful. Included also are the repentant powerful who have learned through their own bitter experience that God is the defender of the poor and oppressed and not the supporter of the unjust, whether they be kings or nations.

Yet this does not mean that God prefers those who maintain a low opinion of themselves. Too often humility has been interpreted in this manner. Rather, God seems to choose those who have been made to feel like outcasts, those who are powerless and marginal, and then gives them a new sense of self-worth. God vindicates them in the eyes of their former oppressors. This theme of vindication of the powerless is a constant one in the Old Testament (see especially I Sam. 2:1-10). It is to be contrasted with the sinful arrogance of the powerful who believe themselves secure in their own strength (see Ps. 73). Humility and weakness alone are not enough for faithfulness. In the Old Testament, faithful humility is combined in the powerless with the belief that God will indeed be their strength

and that they can therefore hold their heads up very high, especially in the face of their oppressors.

In the New Testament, we are not dealing with a national history, but rather with that of an emerging institution. Yet the same pattern continues. Those who hear the gospel gladly are by and large not the powerful within the society of Israel. Rather, they are the fisherfolk, the women, the poor, and those who are marginalized because of their occupations: the tax collectors and the harlots.

The early church, as it moved into Gentile circles, continued to attract those who were unimportant and even powerless, rather than the elite among the Greeks (1 Cor. 1:26-31). Yet there were some exceptions. Within Judaism, and within the New Testament, Paul is the major one who comes from the situation of the powerful. He was clearly among the educated and respected within Judaism (Phil. 3:4-6). We know also that Paul was a Roman citizen, which gave him status within the empire itself. Paul can be classified among the "repentant powerful," rather like King David. For him, believing in this "nobody" Jesus meant joining a group that was totally unlike his own insecure social position. He joined by deciding that the future lay with this marginal group and not with the trimmings of prestige and power to which he had been accustomed (Phil. 3:7-9).

Simon Magus is another example of a powerful person who becomes a Christian. But it takes the fisherman, Simon Peter, to make clear to him that his understanding of the faith is very faulty. Simon Magus evidently then repents and hears the gospel authentically (Acts 8:9-24), but the New Testament does not give us any glimpse into his life after this encounter, such as we are given into the life of Paul.

The New Testament, just as the Old, shows the people of God with all of their faults. We are not presented with an ideal group of perfect people. It is precisely the weakness of the people that allows the surpassing power of God to be seen. And when the people are faithful to such a God, these weak ones are filled with a power that astonishes even the powerful outside the church.

The supreme example of this is, of course, Jesus himself. In terms of worldly power and prestige, surely he was an outsider. Born in a

stable while his parents were being moved around by an alien government; the child of poor parents, he grew up in an obscure village where the mighty need not pay any attention to him! And yet, in this One, God was incarnate. It would have made more sense for the divine incarnation to be in the form of a king or a priest, or at least one of the elite of Jerusalem. Yet God the Son chose the form of a servant (Phil. 2:6-8), one of the powerless ones, even as God had chosen Israel, a weak nation. The cross shows the culmination of such a life, with all of its weakness and marginality. The resurrection shows the vindication by God in the most radical form.

God has a proclivity for speaking the word through the powerless. The whole Bible bears witness to this. Is this an accident, or is it an essential element of the gospel itself? Is there something about God's word that can best be heard and spoken by the powerless? Liberation theology would say there is indeed. And in this it is supported by the words of Jesus: "I thank thee, Father, . . . that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes" (Luke 10:21). The powerful have a difficult time hearing God accurately. Their choice seems to be hearing God's word to them through some apparently powerless person—Nathan, Amos, Simon Peter, Jesus—or not hearing it at all. Such theology would say also that in our own day, this pattern continues. The powerless have readier access to an authentic understanding of the gospel than do the powerful. The powerful need to hear the word through voices they have rejected in their own society. Liberation theology is an understanding of the gospel arising precisely in the midst of such traditionally rejected voices.

SOME BASIC TRAITS AND THEMES

Since the theologies of liberation coming out of diverse groups and situations reflect the concreteness of the struggle in which they are involved, there is no such thing as a "general" or "universal" theology of liberation. And yet, there are some common traits.

The first of these is that all theologies of liberation are politically concrete. They do not seek to be universal, for they know by bitter experience that what is usually called "universal" is too often the

projection of the values, self-image, and interest of a powerful group. In a white racist society an "average" human being is depicted as white. In a sexist society, male domination seems normal, and males take for granted that the fruit of their philosophical and theological reflection has nothing to do with their gender or position of dominance.

This emphasis on concreteness and particularity appears in the various theologies of liberation. Mexican theologian Raúl Vidales has said that "There has never been a 'universal' theology, and even less has there existed a neutral one."⁴ Likewise, James H. Cone states that "Black theologians must work in such a way as to destroy the corruptive influence of white thought by building theology on the sources and norms that are appropriate to the black community."⁵ Therefore, although there are many points of contact, and certainly a common perspective, joining the various theologies of liberation, it is important to keep in mind this emphasis on concreteness, in order to avoid the temptation of becoming a preacher of a universal liberation theology or of someone else's liberation—which is what easily happens when some white males decide to preach liberation.

A second common characteristic of liberation theologies is that the main category with which they work is that of history. A significant segment of traditional theology deals with truth, understood in terms of changelessness and universality. Others seem to believe that the basic category of the biblical message is that of law, doing what is proper and orderly. But liberation theologians know that supposedly "universal" truth is too often the projection of the particular views and interests of the powerful, that changelessness is a value espoused by those who benefit from the status quo, for whom change would be threatening, and that law is most cherished by those who have the civil law and order on their side. As we read the Bible, what we see in it is not so much a book of eternal truths, nor a book of rules, as a book of history. In the Bible, truth is not something that "is," in the sense in which Parmenides used that word, but rather something that happens. And laws are given, not to stifle that happening, but to foster it. This is why Cone says that "In the Bible revelation is inseparable from history and faith. History is the arena in which God's revelation takes place."⁶ And Letty M.

Russell speaks both for feminist theology and for other theologies of liberation when she asserts that "Most liberation theologies are written from the modern point of view that both humanity and the world are to be understood as historical, as both changing and changeable."⁷

This understanding of history, however, has to be clarified. History is not simply the narration of past events. History is a project, both divine and human, for the redemption of God's creation. "If theology is really to speak meaningfully about the mediating point between the 'is' and the 'ought' of human life," says a feminist theologian, "then it takes as its base the entire human project."⁸ And Gustavo Gutiérrez: "Indeed, if human history is above all else an opening to the future, then it is a task, a political occupation, through which man orients and opens himself to the gift which gives history its transcendent meaning: the full and definitive encounter with the Lord and with other men."⁹ James Cone agrees: "By making revelation a historical happening, the Bible makes faith something other than an ecstatic feeling in moments of silent prayer, or an acceptance of inerrant propositions. Faith is the community's response to God's act of liberation. It is saying Yes to God and No to oppressors."¹⁰

A third common characteristic of liberation theologies might appear at first glance to be at odds with what has just been said. Liberation theology refuses to limit itself to the themes most directly and obviously connected with its struggles. This is one of its most puzzling characteristics for those who look at it from the outside. Liberation theology is not a theology *about* liberation which is then content to leave all the other theological themes to traditional theology. On the contrary, it is convinced that its insights have a bearing on every single doctrine of the Christian faith, and that it is therefore a legitimate theology. "Feminist theology is *not* about women. It is about God."¹¹ And "when black people sing, preach, and tell stories about their struggle, one fact is clear: they are not dealing simply with themselves. . . . It is this affirmation of transcendence that prevents Black Theology from being reduced merely to the cultural history of the black people."¹²

For this reason, liberation theology deals with every theme in

Christian theology, from the doctrine of God to that of the last things.¹³ But it deals with each and all of these themes from the perspective of its particular struggle and action—what some liberation theologians call “praxis.”

It is obviously impossible to discuss here all the themes with which liberation theology deals. But in order to illustrate them, we shall deal very briefly with three of them: the doctrine of God, anthropology, and eschatology.

All liberation theologians are agreed that the God of the Bible is not the impassible, ineffable, immutable One of so much of traditional theology. Involved in their particular struggles as they are, they experience faith in a God who is active, who is involved with them in the struggle. This is the meaning that they see in the biblical phrase, “the living God”—a meaning which is amply supported by the incarnation of God in Christ. Out of that *praxis*, of that faith in action, they reflect both on the God of Scripture and the God of traditional theology and come to the conclusion that the impassible and ineffable One, far from being a better way to speak about the God of Scripture, is an idol. It is an idol of changelessness developed, albeit unwittingly, by those who are threatened by change, because the present order works in their favor. Liberation theologians can then point out that the philosophers who inspired this understanding of the Godhead were the same who boasted that philosophy was “the occupation of the idle,” which obviously means those who, because of their social standing, do not have to work and do not wish to see that situation change. It is therefore not surprising that such philosophers produced, and bequeathed to later generations, a view of perfection as changelessness, and of change as that which threatens the very notion of perfection. In general, theologians who have followed the lead of such philosophers have been in similar social circumstances.

The fact that God is active also means that God is *not* neutral. This is the point which many find most disconcerting in liberation theology. They would prefer to speak of a God who deals with all in the same manner, like the blindfolded justice standing in front of our courthouses is supposed to do (although she appears to hear the sound of money and somehow seems to see people's color in spite of

her blindfold!). But liberation theologians tell us that God did not deal equally with Pharaoh and with the children of Israel. God's justice is equalizing, because it is unequal. James Cone has said this in startling words: “Black theology cannot accept a view of God which does not represent him as being for blacks and thus against whites. Living in a world of white oppressors, black people have no time for a neutral God.”¹⁴

God judges “for the meek of the earth” (Isa. 11:4 emphasis added). It is this God, very different from the idol of our society, that liberation theologians discover in the midst of their struggle and in their theological reflection on that struggle.

If we then turn to anthropology, liberation theology rejects the notion that God is best served by our self-abasement. Too often has the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith been presented in such a manner. It is significant that many of those who tell us that humility is the greatest virtue, or that the root of all sin is pride, are doing so from prestigious pulpits and endowed chairs. The tone of the Bible is very different. There the beauty of creation is used to exalt God, and the human creature is seen as the crown of that creation (Ps. 8). Nowhere does the Bible tell us that we are called to be nothing. Rather, we are told that we are made after the divine image, that we are heirs of the Kingdom, children of God, priests and royalty. Any supposed humility that denies this is sinful, for it rejects the divine plan for creation. And yet, traditional theology has often been bent on promoting the virtue of humility, particularly since those who are humble will stay in their place and refuse to claim their rightful status in human societies as children and heirs of God.

Also, still in the realm of anthropology, liberation theologians are asking why is it that in so much preaching and teaching in the church “sin” is usually equated with an inner attitude, or at best with private misdeeds, and so seldom with the sort of sin most often condemned in the Bible, of “those who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no more room” (Isa. 5:8). Why is it that our society, partly through the influence of Christian preaching, has practically come to equate sin with sexual disorders, while ignoring social injustice?¹⁵ Could it not be that once again, and quite unwittingly, Christian theology has been serving the interests of the powerful?

Finally, when it comes to questions of eschatology, liberation theologies are showing that the understanding of "salvation" which has been bequeathed to us is rather truncated. The Bible deals much more with the kingdom of God and the Holy City, than with individual life after death. Life after death is part of the biblical message; however, in Scripture eternal life is usually placed within the context of a new social order. The Kingdom is not so much a place where all will be floating around in the presence of God, as a new order in which "they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid" (Mic. 4:4). It is within that new order, the Kingdom, that eternal life takes place. Eternal life does not consist in being plucked out of history, but in being a participant in its culmination. In the present life, therefore, our task is to move toward that new order, to work for it, to announce it, and to train for it.

Again, this understanding of the goal of history has not been popular among the powerful because it would subvert the present order. As long as history and eternity are two parallel realms, with little relationship to each other, our task in history is to gain access to eternity—by being meek and accepting. But if history is part of eternity, and its purpose is to move toward the Kingdom, if the goal of history itself is that all shall sit under their own fig trees, it follows that our present system of land tenure must be revised. If salvation is seen as having one's soul go to heaven, those who exploit our bodies may even be seen as helps in that process. But if salvation is moving into a new order, which includes the entire human being, then we must strive against everything which at present denies that order.

Thus, at every point of Christian doctrine, liberation theology asks two basic questions: What does it really mean when we see it from the clearer vantage point of the oppressed? And, what is the hidden agenda in the interpretation which has been handed down to us?

LIBERATION AND THE TRAP OF PATERNALISM

If liberation theology is by definition theology done by those who have traditionally been powerless, how can it be useful to those who, by nationality, gender, race, or economic status, are to be classified

as powerful? Most of the ministers in the main-line churches and most of the members of their congregations would be in that category. Can they appropriate and use such a theology without falsifying it? Can it speak to them as well as to the powerless?

There is great danger in the use of liberation theology by those who are generally thought of as the oppressors rather than the oppressed. It is one thing to find the gospel a liberating word to oneself. It is quite a different thing to believe ourselves agents for the liberation of others from a bondage we have never experienced. We are then in the position of announcing the power of a gospel for which we ourselves have no need in our own lives. Precisely because such agents of liberation have never actually experienced the bondage they now address, it is easy for them to oversimplify the problems and misunderstand the situation, both in its causes and in its cures. This can rapidly lead to frustration, especially if the easily seen cures do not work or are not accepted by those whom the agents seek to help.

Even more to the point, it is difficult to tell the role of "liberating agents" from traditional oppression. Such a role implicitly involves a sense of knowing what is good for the oppressed group, and the feeling that they are unable to advance without us. This role may actually be an unconscious cover for a continuation of earlier domination, though now with a more acceptable, "liberation" rhetoric employed. It involves little change in the underlying structures of power. Needless to say, the various liberation movements are suspicious of such agents. It is a significant thing for a black to help other blacks to be aware of their oppression and to take steps to work against domination by whites. It is significant when a woman helps other women to see and work against the domination of men. But for a white or a man to play the role of liberating agent is another matter entirely. The response of the oppressed group will probably be that the contribution of the traditionally powerful person may be helpful, but only in a supportive role, not in a leadership or even in a diagnostic one. The response may also be that they could be of more use in their own group of whites or of men, working for a change in structures that would alter the distribution of power.

The response of liberation theology to such offers of assistance

from the powerful will probably include the strange idea that part of the uselessness of the powerful is that they are not really very powerful at all. Many white, middle-class liberal Christians in this country readily and constantly feel a sense of guilt for their position of affluence in a world beset by problems of hunger and poverty. Obviously, there is ample reason for such a sense of guilt. Yet often such guilt leads to the conclusion that we are guilty because we voluntarily chose such affluence. We created the problem and we can therefore alter the situation. The feeling of guilt is acceptable to us as long as we can also have the sense that we, unlike the oppressed we wish to help, are free and independent members of society. We can decide to assist those who are downtrodden to help them attain the status we have. It is not so pleasant to think of ourselves as both guilty and powerless. The thought that the vast majority of us who see ourselves as free are really the captives of the same structures and forces that cause the poverty we wish to eliminate is difficult to accommodate. Yet this thought is essential if we are to see how liberation theology can relate to our preaching and to many of our churches.

This is not the same as to say that we are all oppressed in one way or another and thus we can be rid of our sense of guilt. That will not do at all, though such an attitude often occurs when we discover our own powerlessness. Nor is it legitimate to spiritualize the meaning of bondage and say that some of us are captives of poverty and others of sin, but ultimately we are all in the same situation. This would imply that we need not deal with our role as oppressors at all, since ultimately all are oppressed. The reality of racism and colonialism, and the evils of injustice must be dealt with. The sense of guilt on the consciences of the comfortable must be nurtured and not assuaged.

Yet the truth remains. We are not the free people we often think we are. The bondage under which we live is subtle, and we are sufficiently rewarded that we do not notice our lack of freedom. The structures that buy or lease land in the Third World and displace people, causing them to become part of the inhuman slums of the sprawling cities, are the same structures that govern much of our lives as well. From products to pricing, from values to self-images, from advertising to television programming, our lives and those of

our children are determined in ways that would startle our great-grandparents. If we try to alter things we discover that even regulatory agencies and government itself are strongly influenced by these same interests. Change is neither easy nor always possible. Our own employment may well be governed or at least financed by the same systems, and if we cry out too loudly, we are made aware that it is not wise.

What does all of this have to do with liberation theology? If we take it seriously, it has a great deal. If we can become aware of the social, political, and economic systems that control our lives, we may then find ourselves on the same side of the struggle as those who are the outcasts of those systems. We can then speak from our own experience of bondage and of the problems and frustrations in seeking to be free. We can know what it means to come to consciousness about our own exploitation, even though we fully recognize that our bondage has been quite comfortable. Only then can we really seek to be free.¹⁶ We can find ourselves learning about such struggles from those whom we charitably tried to help before. They can become our teachers, rather than we theirs. The poor, precisely because they are at the margins of the system, may well know more about its actual working than we who are kept within it. Within the church there is great possibility for such a conversation because the church has within its membership all races, economic groups, and social conditions, and is spread over the face of the earth. Yet our local congregations fail to take constant advantage of this truly catholic character of the church and, in their own congregational life, fail to reflect it.

Liberation theology is significant for us when we seek to become free from actual oppressive structures that bind us. Wherever we, who think ourselves powerful, find that we are, indeed, bound, such a theology can inspire us to have the courage to challenge and to act as the redeemed children of God, as those who are indeed not conformed to this world.

For most of us in this country, liberation theology, to be useful and authentic, demands a kind of double personality. Our consciences must continue to remind us of evil from which we benefit while others suffer. Our awareness of this must increase and

not decrease. Our affluence, even though it hardly seems that in comparison to richer neighbors, still is more than our share of the world's resources. Besides this, however, most of us find ourselves in multiple roles. We are the powerful by race if we are white, yet among the powerless if we are women. We are part of a powerless group if we are in an ethnic minority, yet if we are well educated and employed, we join the powerful in that category. Even within the family structure, the child is often the last victim of those who have no one else over whom to rule and yet are oppressed themselves. Our tendency is to claim only one part of our identity, to think of ourselves always as part of an oppressed group or to think of ourselves always as the powerful. A much more creative dynamic is possible when we claim both parts of our identity, and the liberation given by the gospel can nurture a constant interior dialogue within our own lives. It can also open our lives to a far greater dialogue in the world around us. Then liberation theology can speak to us and to our congregations, making clear and judging our roles as oppressors, but also making clear and freeing us from whatever powers bind us, even those forces that bind us into the role of oppressors in the wider society.

II. DIFFICULTIES IN HEARING THE TEXT

Since the main task of the preacher of liberation is to listen anew to the biblical text, this chapter and the next two will deal with the question of biblical interpretation. In the present chapter, we shall discuss some of the obstacles which impede a liberating interpretation, and in the others we shall deal with some resources for overcoming those obstacles.

SOLA SCRIPTURA

One of the main principles of the Protestant Reformation was that of *sola Scriptura*—the sole authority of Scripture in questions of faith. The Reformers themselves did not agree on the scope and application of that principle. Some, like Luther, meant by it that anything which was contrary to the clear words of Scripture should be rejected, while traditions that did not contradict the Bible could—and normally should—be retained. Zwingli and others went much farther and sought to do away with anything that was not clearly supported by Scripture. But in spite of these differences, all agreed that the reason why the Reformation was needed was that, to a greater or lesser degree, the tradition of the church made it difficult, if not impossible, to read the Bible correctly. Thus, in a sense, the Reformation of the sixteenth

will also serve the practicing preacher whose background in homiletics is spotty or out-of-date, or whose preaching needs strengthening in some specific area.

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I. WHAT IS LIBERATION THEOLOGY?

The North American theological scene has a tendency to latch on to key words and phrases, as if their use were proof that one is up to date. A few years ago it was "secularity." Later it was the "death of God." Today it is "liberation." Preachers of all shades of opinion speak of liberation. Every ecclesiastical assembly seems to feel compelled to include it in its pronouncements. It would seem that one cannot go wrong as long as one is for "liberation."

But words, like coins, lose their sharpness when they are overused. At that point, all sorts of counterfeits are possible. This became clear when the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America was preparing for the Bishops' Conference which took place in Puebla in 1979. At that point, many of the most belligerent opponents of liberation theology employed the strategy of coopting the term "liberation" and interpreting it in their own conservative fashion.¹ Therefore, before we proceed to deal with the subject of liberation preaching, we must clarify what is meant in this context by "liberation theology."

POWER AND POWERLESSNESS: A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

When we speak here of "liberation theology," we are referring to theology done from the perspective of those who have been traditionally powerless in society and voiceless in the church. In the United States, this means blacks, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and

others. In Latin America, Asia, and Africa, it means those who have long been the subjects of colonialism, economic and political as well as ecclesiastical. In societies which worship youth, it means the aged. All over the world, it means women.

There is a growing number of people in these groups who have rejected the self-image imposed on them. If one takes as an example the case of international colonialism, it has been shown that the colonizers need to justify their enterprise by developing a theory of their cultural superiority, and selling that view to the colonized. For a while, overwhelmed by the power of the colonizers, generations of the colonized may believe what they are told about themselves—their lack of responsibility and organizational skills, their emotionalism, their lack of cultural creativity, etc. But eventually, through a process which takes different shapes in various situations, they come to the realization that they do not have to accept the self-image which has been imposed on them by the colonizers.² This process, which has spelled the death of the international colonial empires of the nineteenth century, is also taking place in societies such as ours among those who have been those societies' internal colonies—blacks, chicanos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and women. It is on the toil of such people, and of the colonized overseas, that the great wealth of the North Atlantic has been built. And yet those people receive the smallest share of that wealth. Therefore, the change in self-image on their part is not a purely psychological or internal matter, but one which demands basic structural changes in the ordering of our society.

Not all people who have come to this awareness belong to the church. Many have left it because they perceive it as part of the structure of oppression against which they must rebel. And we must admit that such a view is amply justified, when we remember how Christianity was used to take land from Native Americans and then from Mexicans, how it justified slavery, how few Christian leaders protested against the internment of Japanese Americans during the Second World War, and how the Bible has been used to keep women in a subservient role. At the same time, there are many members of these groups who, out of their Christian faith, refuse to join the movement toward a new self-image or to demand their

rights. Many have been taught that it is unchristian to rock the boat or that if they are humble here on earth they will be rewarded in heaven or that they should be content to be of service to others and not claim positions of leadership.

Therefore, not all those who are involved in the various liberation movements can be called liberation *theologians*, for many have rejected all Christian theology as oppressive. Likewise, not all members of these groups who do theology can be called *liberation theologians*, for many simply repeat and reflect what they have been taught by others.

Liberation theology is that done from the perspective of the traditionally powerless as they experience the empowerment of the gospel, not only in an inner sense, but also in the sense that it compels and enables them to strive for justice. In rejecting the traditional interpretation of the Christian message, they refuse to leave the gospel in the hands of the powerful, to be used for their purposes, and insist that a proper interpretation of Scripture is freeing rather than oppressive.

This is not to say that the powerful have deliberately set out to interpret the Bible in an oppressive way. The truth is much more subtle than that. What actually takes place is an unconscious process through which the values, goals, and interests of those in power are read into Scripture.

Take for instance what happened in the early centuries of the Christian church. At first, most Christians belonged to the lower classes. Their opponents said that they were uncouth and unlearned, and that their teaching made no sense. A great deal of the Christian literature of the first four centuries seeks to respond to that challenge by showing that Christianity agrees with the best of Greek philosophy and Roman law. As an effort to communicate the gospel to those outside the church, this response is quite understandable. But what eventually took place was that Christians themselves began to think that Greek philosophy and Roman law spoke a clearer word about God and the divine purposes than did the Bible itself. By the time Constantine came to power, in the early fourth century, and he and his successors embraced Christianity, it was possible to do so without rejecting many of the values of the "best" Graeco-Roman society.

The conversion of Constantine, and the support which most of his successors gave to the church, accelerated the process. Eusebius of Caesarea wrote a *Church History* which made it appear that the only reasons why the empire had persecuted the church were grave misunderstandings and the maliciousness of some rulers—when in fact many of those who led the worst persecutions were among the ablest statesmen and most just rulers who ever governed the empire. The book of Revelation, which spoke of Rome in rather uncomplimentary fashion, was shunned, and Eusebius himself had doubts about its inclusion in the canon of the New Testament.¹ The ritual of Christian worship began to imitate the formalities of the imperial court, with all their distinctions between various levels in the civil hierarchy. Christ was depicted as sitting on a heavenly throne, in a posture which resembled that of the emperors on their thrones. Even the cross was often studded with precious gems. Anything to obscure the fact that the One whom the church worshiped was a poor carpenter from Galilee, who had been condemned to death as an outlaw by Roman authorities.

Again, this was not a conscious process. Indeed, when one reads the documents of the time one comes across repeated protestations that what is being taught and done in the church is exactly what the apostles taught and did. The "faith of the fathers" became the watchword of orthodoxy. But the "fathers" were for the most part seen as bishops who sat on thrones, very much like the Emperor in Constantinople and the images of Christ in heaven.

There were protests against this. The Donatists broke away from the church and eventually were put down by sheer military force. At another level, the development of monasticism was also a sort of protest. Since the church had embraced the values of the surrounding society, these women and men (in Egypt there seem to have been twice as many female monastics as there were male) felt that the best way for them to reject those values was to live in seclusion, preferably in the desert. This feeling was so widespread that soon travelers said that the desert was as populated as a city. Others, while embracing the monastic attitude toward the prevailing values of society, continued their active involvement in the life of the church and often collided with the powerful. These were the great

saints of the fourth and fifth centuries: Athanasius, Ambrose, Jerome, Macrina, Basil, John Chrysostom, etc. Many of these we shall have occasion to quote later on, when we deal with the resources for liberation preaching from the early Christian tradition.

The usually unconscious process of adapting Christian teaching to the views and interests of the powerful did not end with Constantine and his successors. It has continued, for instance, in the manner in which the oppression and persecution of Jews has received religious and theological sanction. In the history of the Western Hemisphere it has appeared again and again in the taking of the land from its original inhabitants, in the destruction of ancient civilizations, in the annexation of Mexican territories by the U.S., in black slavery on both continents, etc., etc.

This oppressive use of supposedly Christian doctrine has repeatedly been pointed out. However, what we often fail to realize is that most of the people who did this were sincere in their beliefs. It is not that they consciously decided to interpret the Bible in such a way that it supported exploitation. It is rather that, from their perspective, a different interpretation was highly unlikely. And, since their views were reflected in the centers of authority within the church, their interpretation became normative and was passed on as authoritative, not only to later generations among the powerful, but also to the powerless, who were left with the alternative of either acquiescing to exploitation or rejecting Christianity.

What is happening with the birth of liberation theologies is that many among the traditionally powerless are asking the basic question of whether or not the manner in which the Bible has been interpreted by the powerful is accurate. This is the "ideological suspicion" of which we shall have much more to say later on. Could it not be that a biblical interpretation, so to speak, "from below" would uncover dimensions of the biblical message that have often been ignored?

THE MAIN BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Many have argued that an interpretation of the Bible done by the powerless would be no less biased and determined by self-interest

than is the current one done by the powerful. Why trade one such interpretation for another? Nothing would really be gained. The response of liberation theologians is clear at this point and needs to be understood before any real progress can be made in the appreciation of liberation theology for preaching. It has to do with the perspective of the Bible itself.

If the major portion of the Bible is written by those who, in their own social situation, are the powerless and oppressed, if it is their perspective on the activity of God that is given us by Scripture, then surely a more accurate interpretation of the biblical word can be gained by those who currently stand in a parallel place in our own societies than by those who are powerful. This response needs to be looked at in some detail.

First of all, is it true that most of the Bible is written from the perspective of the powerless? Surely this is the case. The people of Israel begin their organized life as a band of runaway slaves, escaping the oppression of Pharaoh. Even the Promised Land they finally attain is an insecure piece of geography, at the crossroads of trade routes and constantly a battleground for the mighty empires that surround Israel. The only times Israel has a semblance of independent national life is in brief periods when these empires—Egypt to the west, or whatever is the current name of the peoples to the northeast in the great Mesopotamian and Persian area, and finally Macedonia, Syria, and Rome—are in disarray internally and cannot exercise their usual demand for tribute or subservience.

Almost perversely, God chose a people weak and small in number in preference to the mighty nations of the earth (Deut. 7:7). Part of the reason for this is that Israel could then be clear that the power is God's power, and not Israel's own strength (Deut. 8:1-20). In grateful response to God, Israel ought then to be obedient to God's will as expressed in the law. Relying on her own strength, which was tempting whenever the nation seemed to be strong and independent, inevitably brought about faithlessness and disobedience, which God then punished and cured by removing Israel's apparent power.

The slaves escaping from Egypt surely had a different perspective on God's activity and character than did their Egyptian pursuers. The kings of Israel often forgot the Law when the nation was strong

and prosperous. Even mighty David was rebuked by Nathan the prophet (II Sam. 12:1-15). David's greatness was seen in his response to the rebuke, in his hearing of the Word of God to him from the prophet. Other kings did not listen so well. King Jeroboam much preferred to listen to his own court priests who told him what he wished to hear than to Amos, the rough shepherd from out of town, who brought God's authentic word to him (Amos 7:10-17).

This is the pattern throughout much of the Old Testament. The powerful nations are overthrown by small Israel when Israel is obedient. The powerful within Israel are rebuked by the seemingly powerless prophets. What is astonishing is that the Old Testament records all of this. The Old Testament is not only our sacred Scripture. It is also a national history. Such histories normally glorify the nation. All difficulties are due to evil enemies, never to sinfulness within the nation itself. National heroes are models of perfection and their weaknesses overlooked. That is the general plan of secular national histories. But the Old Testament is quite different, and in this difference is seen the revelation of God. The official records are included, but the minority report of the prophets is even more in evidence. What has been preserved by Israel is the perspective of the powerless over against the viewpoint of the powerful. Included also are the repentant powerful who have learned through their own bitter experience that God is the defender of the poor and oppressed and not the supporter of the unjust, whether they be kings or nations.

Yet this does not mean that God prefers those who maintain a low opinion of themselves. Too often humility has been interpreted in this manner. Rather, God seems to choose those who have been made to feel like outcasts, those who are powerless and marginal, and then gives them a new sense of self-worth. God vindicates them in the eyes of their former oppressors. This theme of vindication of the powerless is a constant one in the Old Testament (see especially I Sam. 2:1-10). It is to be contrasted with the sinful arrogance of the powerful who believe themselves secure in their own strength (see Ps. 73). Humility and weakness alone are not enough for faithfulness. In the Old Testament, faithful humility is combined in the powerless with the belief that God will indeed be their strength

and that they can therefore hold their heads up very high, especially in the face of their oppressors.

In the New Testament, we are not dealing with a national history, but rather with that of an emerging institution. Yet the same pattern continues. Those who hear the gospel gladly are by and large not the powerful within the society of Israel. Rather, they are the fisherfolk, the women, the poor, and those who are marginalized because of their occupations: the tax collectors and the harlots.

The early church, as it moved into Gentile circles, continued to attract those who were unimportant and even powerless, rather than the elite among the Greeks (I Cor. 1:26-31). Yet there were some exceptions. Within Judaism, and within the New Testament, Paul is the major one who comes from the situation of the powerful. He was clearly among the educated and respected within Judaism (Phil. 3:4-6). We know also that Paul was a Roman citizen, which gave him status within the empire itself. Paul can be classified among the "repentant powerful," rather like King David. For him, believing in this "nobody" Jesus meant joining a group that was totally unlike his own insecure social position. He joined by deciding that the future lay with this marginal group and not with the trimmings of prestige and power to which he had been accustomed (Phil. 3:7-9).

Simon Magus is another example of a powerful person who becomes a Christian. But it takes the fisherman, Simon Peter, to make clear to him that his understanding of the faith is very faulty. Simon Magus evidently then repents and hears the gospel authentically (Acts 8:9-24), but the New Testament does not give us any glimpse into his life after this encounter, such as we are given into the life of Paul.

The New Testament, just as the Old, shows the people of God with all of their faults. We are not presented with an ideal group of perfect people. It is precisely the weakness of the people that allows the surpassing power of God to be seen. And when the people are faithful to such a God, these weak ones are filled with a power that astonishes even the powerful outside the church.

The supreme example of this is, of course, Jesus himself. In terms of worldly power and prestige, surely he was an outsider. Born in a

stable while his parents were being moved around by an alien government; the child of poor parents, he grew up in an obscure village where the mighty need not pay any attention to him! And yet, in this One, God was incarnate. It would have made more sense for the divine incarnation to be in the form of a king or a priest, or at least one of the elite of Jerusalem. Yet God the Son chose the form of a servant (Phil. 2:6-8), one of the powerless ones, even as God had chosen Israel, a weak nation. The cross shows the culmination of such a life, with all of its weakness and marginality. The resurrection shows the vindication by God in the most radical form.

God has a proclivity for speaking the word through the powerless. The whole Bible bears witness to this. Is this an accident, or is it an essential element of the gospel itself? Is there something about God's word that can best be heard and spoken by the powerless? Liberation theology would say there is indeed. And in this it is supported by the words of Jesus: "I thank thee, Father, . . . that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes" (Luke 10:21). The powerful have a difficult time hearing God accurately. Their choice seems to be hearing God's word to them through some apparently powerless person—Nathan, Amos, Simon Peter, Jesus—or not hearing it at all. Such theology would say also that in our own day, this pattern continues. The powerless have readier access to an authentic understanding of the gospel than do the powerful. The powerful need to hear the word through voices they have rejected in their own society. Liberation theology is an understanding of the gospel arising precisely in the midst of such traditionally rejected voices.

SOME BASIC TRAITS AND THEMES

Since the theologies of liberation coming out of diverse groups and situations reflect the concreteness of the struggle in which they are involved, there is no such thing as a "general" or "universal" theology of liberation. And yet, there are some common traits.

The first of these is that all theologies of liberation are politically concrete. They do not seek to be universal, for they know by bitter experience that what is usually called "universal" is too often the

projection of the values, self-image, and interest of a powerful group. In a white racist society an "average" human being is depicted as white. In a sexist society, male domination seems normal, and males take for granted that the fruit of their philosophical and theological reflection has nothing to do with their gender or position of dominance.

This emphasis on concreteness and particularity appears in the various theologies of liberation. Mexican theologian Raúl Vidales has said that "There has never been a 'universal' theology, and even less has there existed a neutral one."⁴ Likewise, James H. Cone states that "Black theologians must work in such a way as to destroy the corruptive influence of white thought by building theology on the sources and norms that are appropriate to the black community."⁵ Therefore, although there are many points of contact, and certainly a common perspective, joining the various theologies of liberation, it is important to keep in mind this emphasis on concreteness, in order to avoid the temptation of becoming a preacher of a universal liberation theology or of someone else's liberation—which is what easily happens when some white males decide to preach liberation.

A second common characteristic of liberation theologies is that the main category with which they work is that of history. A significant segment of traditional theology deals with truth, understood in terms of changelessness and universality. Others seem to believe that the basic category of the biblical message is that of law, doing what is proper and orderly. But liberation theologians know that supposedly "universal" truth is too often the projection of the particular views and interests of the powerful, that changelessness is a value espoused by those who benefit from the status quo, for whom change would be threatening, and that law is most cherished by those who have the civil law and order on their side. As we read the Bible, what we see in it is not so much a book of eternal truths, nor a book of rules, as a book of history. In the Bible, truth is not something that "is," in the sense in which Parmenides used that word, but rather something that happens. And laws are given, not to stifle that happening, but to foster it. This is why Cone says that "In the Bible revelation is inseparable from history and faith. History is the arena in which God's revelation takes place."⁶ And Letty M.

Russell speaks both for feminist theology and for other theologies of liberation when she asserts that "Most liberation theologies are written from the modern point of view that both humanity and the world are to be understood as historical, as both changing and changeable."⁷

This understanding of history, however, has to be clarified. History is not simply the narration of past events. History is a project, both divine and human, for the redemption of God's creation. "If theology is really to speak meaningfully about the mediating point between the 'is' and the 'ought' of human life," says a feminist theologian, "then it takes as its base the entire human project."⁸ And Gustavo Gutiérrez: "Indeed, if human history is above all else an opening to the future, then it is a task, a political occupation, through which man orients and opens himself to the gift which gives history its transcendent meaning: the full and definitive encounter with the Lord and with other men."⁹ James Cone agrees: "By making revelation a historical happening, the Bible makes faith something other than an ecstatic feeling in moments of silent prayer, or an acceptance of inerrant propositions. Faith is the community's response to God's act of liberation. It is saying Yes to God and No to oppressors."¹⁰

A third common characteristic of liberation theologies might appear at first glance to be at odds with what has just been said. Liberation theology refuses to limit itself to the themes most directly and obviously connected with its struggles. This is one of its most puzzling characteristics for those who look at it from the outside. Liberation theology is not a theology *about* liberation which is then content to leave all the other theological themes to traditional theology. On the contrary, it is convinced that its insights have a bearing on every single doctrine of the Christian faith, and that it is therefore a legitimate theology. "Feminist theology is not about women. It is about God."¹¹ And "when black people sing, preach, and tell stories about their struggle, one fact is clear: they are not dealing simply with themselves. . . . It is this affirmation of transcendence that prevents Black Theology from being reduced merely to the cultural history of the black people."¹²

For this reason, liberation theology deals with every theme in

Christian theology, from the doctrine of God to that of the last things.¹¹ But it deals with each and all of these themes from the perspective of its particular struggle and action—what some liberation theologians call “praxis.”

It is obviously impossible to discuss here all the themes with which liberation theology deals. But in order to illustrate them, we shall deal very briefly with three of them: the doctrine of God, anthropology, and eschatology.

All liberation theologians are agreed that the God of the Bible is not the impassible, ineffable, immutable One of so much of traditional theology. Involved in their particular struggles as they are, they experience faith in a God who is active, who is involved with them in the struggle. This is the meaning that they see in the biblical phrase, “the living God”—a meaning which is amply supported by the incarnation of God in Christ. Out of that *praxis*, of that faith in action, they reflect both on the God of Scripture and the God of traditional theology and come to the conclusion that the impassible and ineffable One, far from being a better way to speak about the God of Scripture, is an idol. It is an idol of changelessness developed, albeit unwittingly, by those who are threatened by change, because the present order works in their favor. Liberation theologians can then point out that the philosophers who inspired this understanding of the Godhead were the same who boasted that philosophy was “the occupation of the idle,” which obviously means those who, because of their social standing, do not have to work and do not wish to see that situation change. It is therefore not surprising that such philosophers produced, and bequeathed to later generations, a view of perfection as changelessness, and of change as that which threatens the very notion of perfection. In general, theologians who have followed the lead of such philosophers have been in similar social circumstances.

The fact that God is active also means that God is *not* neutral. This is the point which many find most disconcerting in liberation theology. They would prefer to speak of a God who deals with all in the same manner, like the blindfolded justice standing in front of our courthouses is supposed to do (although she appears to hear the sound of money and somehow seems to see people's color in spite of

her blindfold!). But liberation theologians tell us that God did not deal equally with Pharaoh and with the children of Israel. God's justice is equalizing, because it is unequal. James Cone has said this in startling words: “Black theology cannot accept a view of God which does not represent him as being for blacks and thus against whites. Living in a world of white oppressors, black people have no time for a neutral God.”¹⁴

God judges “for the meek of the earth” (Isa. 11:4 emphasis added). It is this God, very different from the idol of our society, that liberation theologians discover in the midst of their struggle and in their theological reflection on that struggle.

If we then turn to anthropology, liberation theology rejects the notion that God is best served by our self-abasement. Too often has the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith been presented in such a manner. It is significant that many of those who tell us that humility is the greatest virtue, or that the root of all sin is pride, are doing so from prestigious pulpits and endowed chairs. The tone of the Bible is very different. There the beauty of creation is used to exalt God, and the human creature is seen as the crown of that creation (Ps. 8). Nowhere does the Bible tell us that we are called to be nothing. Rather, we are told that we are made after the divine image, that we are heirs of the Kingdom, children of God, priests and royalty. Any supposed humility that denies this is sinful, for it rejects the divine plan for creation. And yet, traditional theology has often been bent on promoting the virtue of humility, particularly since those who are humble will stay in their place and refuse to claim their rightful status in human societies as children and heirs of God.

Also, still in the realm of anthropology, liberation theologians are asking why is it that in so much preaching and teaching in the church “sin” is usually equated with an inner attitude, or at best with private misdeeds, and so seldom with the sort of sin most often condemned in the Bible, of “those who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no more room” (Isa. 5:8). Why is it that our society, partly through the influence of Christian preaching, has practically come to equate sin with sexual disorders, while ignoring social injustice?¹⁵ Could it not be that once again, and quite unwittingly, Christian theology has been serving the interests of the powerful?

Finally, when it comes to questions of eschatology, liberation theologies are showing that the understanding of "salvation" which has been bequeathed to us is rather truncated. The Bible deals much more with the kingdom of God and the Holy City, than with individual life after death. Life after death is part of the biblical message; however, in Scripture eternal life is usually placed within the context of a new social order. The Kingdom is not so much a place where all will be floating around in the presence of God, as a new order in which "they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid" (Mic. 4:4). It is within that new order, the Kingdom, that eternal life takes place. Eternal life does not consist in being plucked out of history, but in being a participant in its culmination. In the present life, therefore, our task is to move toward that new order, to work for it, to announce it, and to train for it.

Again, this understanding of the goal of history has not been popular among the powerful because it would subvert the present order. As long as history and eternity are two parallel realms, with little relationship to each other, our task in history is to gain access to eternity—by being meek and accepting. But if history is part of eternity, and its purpose is to move toward the Kingdom, if the goal of history itself is that all shall sit under their own fig trees, it follows that our present system of land tenure must be revised. If salvation is seen as having one's soul go to heaven, those who exploit our bodies may even be seen as helps in that process. But if salvation is moving into a new order, which includes the entire human being, then we must strive against everything which at present denies that order.

Thus, at every point of Christian doctrine, liberation theology asks two basic questions: What does it really mean when we see it from the clearer vantage point of the oppressed? And, what is the hidden agenda in the interpretation which has been handed down to us?

LIBERATION AND THE TRAP OF PATERNALISM

If liberation theology is by definition theology done by those who have traditionally been powerless, how can it be useful to those who, by nationality, gender, race, or economic status, are to be classified

as powerful? Most of the ministers in the main-line churches and most of the members of their congregations would be in that category. Can they appropriate and use such a theology without falsifying it? Can it speak to them as well as to the powerless?

There is great danger in the use of liberation theology by those who are generally thought of as the oppressors rather than the oppressed. It is one thing to find the gospel a liberating word to oneself. It is quite a different thing to believe ourselves agents for the liberation of others from a bondage we have never experienced. We are then in the position of announcing the power of a gospel for which we ourselves have no need in our own lives. Precisely because such agents of liberation have never actually experienced the bondage they now address, it is easy for them to oversimplify the problems and misunderstand the situation, both in its causes and in its cures. This can rapidly lead to frustration, especially if the easily seen cures do not work or are not accepted by those whom the agents seek to help.

Even more to the point, it is difficult to tell the role of "liberating agents" from traditional oppression. Such a role implicitly involves a sense of knowing what is good for the oppressed group, and the feeling that they are unable to advance without us. This role may actually be an unconscious cover for a continuation of earlier domination, though now with a more acceptable, "liberation" rhetoric employed. It involves little change in the underlying structures of power. Needless to say, the various liberation movements are suspicious of such agents. It is a significant thing for a black to help other blacks to be aware of their oppression and to take steps to work against domination by whites. It is significant when a woman helps other women to see and work against the domination of men. But for a white or a man to play the role of liberating agent is another matter entirely. The response of the oppressed group will probably be that the contribution of the traditionally powerful person may be helpful, but only in a supportive role, not in a leadership or even in a diagnostic one. The response may also be that they could be of more use in their own group of whites or of men, working for a change in structures that would alter the distribution of power.

The response of liberation theology to such offers of assistance

from the powerful will probably include the strange idea that part of the uselessness of the powerful is that they are not really very powerful at all. Many white, middle-class liberal Christians in this country readily and constantly feel a sense of guilt for their position of affluence in a world beset by problems of hunger and poverty. Obviously, there is ample reason for such a sense of guilt. Yet often such guilt leads to the conclusion that we are guilty because we voluntarily chose such affluence. We created the problem and we can therefore alter the situation. The feeling of guilt is acceptable to us as long as we can also have the sense that we, unlike the oppressed we wish to help, are free and independent members of society. We can decide to assist those who are downtrodden to help them attain the status we have. It is not so pleasant to think of ourselves as both guilty and powerless. The thought that the vast majority of us who see ourselves as free are really the captives of the same structures and forces that cause the poverty we wish to eliminate is difficult to accommodate. Yet this thought is essential if we are to see how liberation theology can relate to our preaching and to many of our churches.

This is not the same as to say that we are all oppressed in one way or another and thus we can be rid of our sense of guilt. That will not do at all, though such an attitude often occurs when we discover our own powerlessness. Nor is it legitimate to spiritualize the meaning of bondage and say that some of us are captives of poverty and others of sin, but ultimately we are all in the same situation. This would imply that we need not deal with our role as oppressors at all, since ultimately all are oppressed. The reality of racism and colonialism, and the evils of injustice must be dealt with. The sense of guilt on the consciences of the comfortable must be nurtured and not assuaged.

Yet the truth remains. We are not the free people we often think we are. The bondage under which we live is subtle, and we are sufficiently rewarded that we do not notice our lack of freedom. The structures that buy or lease land in the Third World and displace people, causing them to become part of the inhuman slums of the sprawling cities, are the same structures that govern much of our lives as well. From products to pricing, from values to self-images, from advertising to television programming, our lives and those of

our children are determined in ways that would startle our great-grandparents. If we try to alter things we discover that even regulatory agencies and government itself are strongly influenced by these same interests. Change is neither easy nor always possible. Our own employment may well be governed or at least financed by the same systems, and if we cry out too loudly, we are made aware that it is not wise.

What does all of this have to do with liberation theology? If we take it seriously, it has a great deal. If we can become aware of the social, political, and economic systems that control our lives, we may then find ourselves on the same side of the struggle as those who are the outcasts of those systems. We can then speak from our own experience of bondage and of the problems and frustrations in seeking to be free. We can know what it means to come to consciousness about our own exploitation, even though we fully recognize that our bondage has been quite comfortable. Only then can we really seek to be free.¹⁶ We can find ourselves learning about such struggles from those whom we charitably tried to help before. They can become our teachers, rather than we theirs. The poor, precisely because they are at the margins of the system, may well know more about its actual working than we who are kept within it. Within the church there is great possibility for such a conversation because the church has within its membership all races, economic groups, and social conditions, and is spread over the face of the earth. Yet our local congregations fail to take constant advantage of this truly catholic character of the church and, in their own congregational life, fail to reflect it.

Liberation theology is significant for us when we seek to become free from actual oppressive structures that bind us. Wherever we, who think ourselves powerful, find that we are, indeed, bound, such a theology can inspire us to have the courage to challenge and to act as the redeemed children of God, as those who are indeed not conformed to this world.

For most of us in this country, liberation theology, to be useful and authentic, demands a kind of double personality. Our consciences must continue to remind us of evil from which we benefit while others suffer. Our awareness of this must increase and

not decrease. Our affluence, even though it hardly seems that in comparison to richer neighbors, still is more than our share of the world's resources. Besides this, however, most of us find ourselves in multiple roles. We are the powerful by race if we are white, yet among the powerless if we are women. We are part of a powerless group if we are in an ethnic minority, yet if we are well educated and employed, we join the powerful in that category. Even within the family structure, the child is often the last victim of those who have no one else over whom to rule and yet are oppressed themselves. Our tendency is to claim only one part of our identity, to think of ourselves always as part of an oppressed group or to think of ourselves always as the powerful. A much more creative dynamic is possible when we claim both parts of our identity, and the liberation given by the gospel can nurture a constant interior dialogue within our own lives. It can also open our lives to a far greater dialogue in the world around us. Then liberation theology can speak to us and to our congregations, making clear and judging our roles as oppressors, but also making clear and freeing us from whatever powers bind us, even those forces that bind us into the role of oppressors in the wider society.

II. DIFFICULTIES IN HEARING THE TEXT

Since the main task of the preacher of liberation is to listen anew to the biblical text, this chapter and the next two will deal with the question of biblical interpretation. In the present chapter, we shall discuss some of the obstacles which impede a liberating interpretation, and in the others we shall deal with some resources for overcoming those obstacles.

SOLA SCRIPTURA

One of the main principles of the Protestant Reformation was that of *sola Scriptura*—the sole authority of Scripture in questions of faith. The Reformers themselves did not agree on the scope and application of that principle. Some, like Luther, meant by it that anything which was contrary to the clear words of Scripture should be rejected, while traditions that did not contradict the Bible could—and normally should—be retained. Zwingli and others went much farther and sought to do away with anything that was not clearly supported by Scripture. But in spite of these differences, all agreed that the reason why the Reformation was needed was that, to a greater or lesser degree, the tradition of the church made it difficult, if not impossible, to read the Bible correctly. Thus, in a sense, the Reformation of the sixteenth

WORDS ARE IMPORTANT

Not long ago I talked with a woman about DIGNITY. Although she had heard of the organization and had even attended a Mass sponsored by DIGNITY, she was surprised to learn of my involvement. She was under the impression that DIGNITY was an organization for men. The predominance of men and the language used at the liturgy gave her the impression that women were not welcome.

The use of male gender language contributed to the alienation of this woman. Though many people are comfortable with sexist language, there are men and women who find it distracting to their worship and a cause for anger and alienation. Gathering at the Eucharistic table is a sign of our unity. Therefore we must be concerned with anything that would separate us from one another.

Language has a powerful influence in our lives. Our words help shape reality as we see it. They let others know our basic attitudes and prejudices. Words help build the bridges of our communication to others. However, our words can convey a meaning that we do not intend.

Most of us do not remember when we first began to talk. Language is usually learned effortlessly and almost unconsciously. For this very reason we often fail to see the hidden meaning of many words and expressions. Our task then is to re-evaluate what our language is really saying. What is the hidden message we convey? By our use of language are we reinforcing the stereotypes of female inferiority and male superiority? Do our words make women invisible? The terms 'man' and 'men' have become so intimately tied to the meaning of male person that they can no longer be considered broad enough to apply to all people. Do the words we use cause some women or minorities to be alienated from our community? Have the words we use in our prayers made God too small? God is transcendent, why then do we refer to God as male?

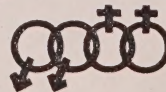
Words are important. If we want our organization to reflect the Gospel imperative of justice and if we are to heed Jesus' call of unity and freedom, then we must be concerned with language. For it is our language which reflects our commitment to the affirmation of the value and dignity of each person.

GUIDELINES FOR LANGUAGE IN LITURGY

1. Generic words such as man, men, mankind and all men should be replaced with words that explicitly include everyone.
Men - us, people.
Brothers - neighbors, people, persons.
Fathers - ancestors, forerunners, parents, precursors, forebearers.
Mankind - humanity, human race, people.
Fellowship - community, family.
2. The use of the male pronouns reinforce the idea of male dominance. Whenever possible avoid the use of 'he', 'him', and 'his' using plural pronouns or using 'one' or the use of the second person.
3. If the Scripture of the day calls for a passage with sexist attitudes, there are two alternatives:
 - a. substitute another passage.
 - b. explain the passage carefully, e.g., Paul's cultural conditioning, the assumptions of the era. Do not use sex passages without explanation.
4. Readings - Read the Scriptures in sexually balanced language.
5. Prayers - Use sexually balanced language, e.g., not "pray brothers" but "pray brothers and sisters", not "for all men" "for all people" or "for all".
6. Use of nonsex specific words for God, such as Spirit, Wisdom, Holy One, Eternal One, Sustainer, Creator, Advocate, Defender, Redeemer.
7. Names for God should avoid "excessive" of male imagery e.g., King, Master, Father. Possible alternatives, Yahweh, Mother/Father, Parent, 'Abba God' or repeating the word God.
8. Avoid sexist hymns. If sexist language in a hymn can't be changed, substitute another hymn. The St. Louis Jesuits are working out with corrected versions of the songs which eliminate gender problems.

(Some of the ideas in these guidelines were taken from "Guidelines for Religious Language" Published by the Quixote Center.)

Marybeth
DIGNITY/Chicago



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The Words of Worship: Beyond Liturgical Sexism

Our growing awareness of the sexist problems inherent in our language provides us with a valuable new hermeneutical tool.

JAMES F. WHITE

★ THE PROBLEM of sexist language in worship has caught up with us; there is no avoiding it any longer, though I still hear many evasions. The most common excuse: "Language is not that important." My usual rejoinder: "How long has it been since you last used the term 'nigger'?" So long as someone uses that less-than-human term for a black person, it is impossible for him or her to progress toward racial justice: Language is not an indifferent matter, as Earl Butz discovered. A change in speech habits is necessary if we are to change attitudes.

No longer do we have a choice to be concerned or not about sexist language. A fundamental issue of justice is involved, and the church cannot be silent in matters of justice without being a disobedient church. Obedience to Christ means according justice to others just as we desire justice for ourselves. To determine what constitutes justice in this instance, to be sure, may not be simple, but we should have little difficulty in agreeing that an obedient church has no choice about opposing injustice.

The importance of public worship in this matter is only slightly less obvious. Nowhere else does the average Christian so frequently take part in explicit theological statements and actions as in Christian worship. Nothing helps form a Christian's thinking about God and one's responsibility to others so persistently as continued engagement in public worship. Worship shapes the theology of the laity through the weekly repetition of constant elements of worship plus unique local and temporal elaborations of them by the gathered community.

Feminine Images

Let us begin with the good news. Our growing awareness of the sexist problems inherent in language provides us with a valuable new hermeneutical tool. It opens to us aspects of God's word to which we have hitherto been deaf and provides us with a deeper sensitivity for hearing what God says through Scripture. One soon realizes the importance of accurate biblical translations. Frequently the original texts make no indication of gender; it has been supplied gratuitously by translators. This is

true of the pronoun *tis*, often translated "a man" instead of "anyone." In many cases, sexual distinctions have been dubbed in for the sake of readability by modern translators when these distinctions do not exist in original texts. More nearly accurate translations would not make such arbitrary distinctions. Such knowledge ought to be an incentive to more intensive study of the Scriptures in the original languages.

But there is a more important level of awareness, sensitive to the variety of metaphors in which Scripture refers to God in feminine images. Jesus, for instance, in an image rarely used in worship, refers to himself as wishing to gather people together as a "mother hen gathers her brood under her wings" (Matt. 23:27, Luke 13:34). Only one who has kept chickens can know how protective a mother hen is and what a marvelous image she is of divine protectiveness. In the prologue to John's Gospel, translators shy away from an exact rendition of the last verse (1:18), which says literally, "God's only begotten, he who is in the Father's breast." The word *kolpos* (breast) rarely makes it into English, the RSV being an exception here. Apparently even the faint suggestion of female anatomy for God troubles us, though anthropomorphisms abound in Scripture.

We feel uncomfortable with such passages as Deuteronomy 32:18: "You forsook the creator who begot you and cared nothing for God who brought you to birth." Jesus compares his death and resurrection to labor pains and childbirth (John 16:21). Much of our theology of Christian initiation might be more balanced if the image of new birth had developed throughout history as did images of incorporation or forgiveness. New birth is equally as prominent for initiation in the New Testament. Baptismal regeneration became a most controversial term, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries. A positive approach to the birth images in baptism (John 3:5, Titus 3:5) gives an important dimension to God's gift of new life in the body of Christ.

Prenatal and Postnatal Events

Protestantism has yet to recover those aspects of Christology witnessed to by some of the minor christological feasts. It is probably no accident that,

despite widespread recovery of much of the Christian year, Protestants have not seen much value yet in the feasts of Naming, Presentation, Annunciation and Visitation. The biblical evidence, of course, is in the first two chapters of Luke, but there is far more there than just shepherds and angels. Prenatal and postnatal events are part of the history of salvation, though we ignore them. The Annunciation (March 25) has had powerful appeal to the greatest painters of past ages; we have looked in another direction, though this feast once signaled the start of the civil year. It still marks the beginning of the climactic event in the salvation of the whole human race. And it is entirely in the hands of a woman. Traditionally an angel is sexless, and the only other person in Luke 1:26-38 is a woman, Mary. There are parallels with her kinswoman, Elizabeth — John is not the only forerunner. Visitation (May 31) has intrigued musicians with the *Magnificat*. In the *Magnificat* the social creed of the Christian church is articulated in its most concise form — all in the context of a dialogue between two peasant women (Luke 1:39-56).

The postnatal stories are too good to miss, too. The Naming of Jesus (Luke 2:21) stresses Christ's identification with human society, particularly in receiving a common Hebrew name on the eighth day (January 1). The Presentation in the Temple (Luke 2:22-38) on the 40th day (February 2) is the first event in which humans proclaim the meaning of the Christ child. And that proclamation comes first from the lips of the elderly — a man and a woman, Simeon and Anna. What a difference it would have made if the church had based its theology of ordination on these two prototypal proclaimers of God's word! I cite these passages only to show rich images that we would probably not have overlooked if they had been masculine. Fresh sensitivity to the female role in the process of salvation will help us discover other elements in God's word which we have missed.

Limiting God, Limiting People

There seem to be two stages in applying our sensitivity about sexist language in worship: the negative stage of eliminating exclusive language and the positive one of developing language that affirms both sexes. Unfortunately, most who have worked in this field have been content with the first of these. *Actually we need language even more explicitly sexual than that we now use — language that affirms both sexes in our knowledge of God and of humanity.*

The negative stage, of course, is very important. It comes in the realization that the English language has definitely changed in the past decade and that such terms as "man," "mankind," "men" and the masculine pronouns are no longer being used in the familiar generic sense. This change has been recog-

nized by the National Council of Teachers of English, a group more likely to acknowledge current usages than to initiate new ones.

The negative stage has two implications for the language of worship. First of all, it becomes increasingly problematic to limit God to masculine images — and the words "he," "his" and "himself" are no longer so inclusive as they once were. Words that imply that God is masculine, as these pronouns now do, are much more restrictive and limiting in naming God than such terms were in the past. Today a hymn, a prayer or creed that uses these pronouns says something much more narrow than it did a decade ago. Since we hardly want to set limits to God, these words must be replaced by more inclusive language. This task challenges us to broaden our comprehension of the deity. The Section on Worship of the United Methodist Church has published a list of 200 ascriptions for God. Perusal of this fascinating document can lead to an expansion of our language for addressing God and our comprehension of the Giver of Love. The first step is the purgative one of eliminating language that is now exclusively male in our speech about the Redeemer of Israel.

Second, the same negative stage is necessary with language regarding people. In the past, it meant one thing to say "who for us men and for our salvation." Today, that phrase means something quite different. The new International Consultation on English Texts (ICET) translation, now used by many denominations, says "for us and for our salvation." There is no more need to limit people today than to limit God. The negative step means pruning away terms that are exclusive in present use: "man,"

Annunciation

+ DOWN! downward plummets Gabriel
in his annual flight
on spangled wings, his voice of gold,
his visage silver-bright.

But Mary greets him with a yawn,
a cold, inquiring, "Well?"
until he fairly cowers to say
the joy he came to tell,

And stammers in his voice of gold,
the jeweled jaw shocked shut,
when Mary in her voice of brass
shrugs and snaps, "So what?"

Poor Gabriel! He blurts the news,
and flaps away, unsure,
for modern-day Magnificats
are not what once they were!

GLORIA MAXSON.

"men," "mankind." Salvation is for all, not for just one sex, as these words now imply.

Inclusive Terms

The positive stage, on the other hand, is both more creative and more difficult. It is the phase in which we develop inclusive terms for our understanding of God and for our speech about humanity. It implies an even more explicitly sexual language than we now use, but a language in which female and male terms are balanced. It means that when God created us in God's own image, we were created male and female. We do not seek a gray, sexless imagery, as if God created us neuter, but the rich coloration of both sexes. This effort is not easy; it is simpler to follow the familiar monochrome. But when we take this step, we soon find that our visions of both God and humanity are greatly expanded.

How do we reach this creative stage? We begin with Scripture and tradition. We find, once we start looking, traces scattered everywhere of the female side of God, the feminine half of humanity. Eleanor McLaughlin reminds us that Chrysostom could call God "Sister, Mother" and Anselm could pray to Jesus as Mother. It helps to know that Chrysostom and Anselm could do it. We need to recall the medieval debates on the Christian life as reflecting either Mary or Martha. Our first steps must be taken on familiar ground but with a keenness of sight we have never had before. We must discover the femi-

nine images already available in Scripture and tradition before we can develop new ones.

A word of caution may be helpful. It now seems that more recent materials, especially hymns, are the worst linguistically. Not until the 20th century did hymnists get aroused about the brotherhood of man. Victorians were not concerned about "lesser breeds without the law." But the "good guys" of the social gospel could cry: "Join hands, then, brothers of the faith," meaning something twice as inclusive as those words now signify. Others could sing: "Till sons of men shall learn thy love," or "The voice of God is calling/ Its summons unto men," not realizing how exclusive those lines would sound today. Someone has suggested that we need to change only one letter in another hymn: "Wise up, O men of God!" All these and many more hymns now suggest the opposite of what they intend. Consequently, they may have to go unsung for a time.

What do we do with much of the older hymnody and language of prayer? I do not believe that it should all be discarded, though one can be more selective in choosing it. There are plenty of alternatives to singing "Good Christian Men, Rejoice." But even that can be mended once people learn to substitute "folk" for "men," "one" for "man," and "humans" for "mankind." In so doing, we are really reinforcing the writer's intentions by translating a previous language into a present one. And there are some surprisingly good words we never before appreciated, such as the 15th century "O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing." The translations of the International Consultation on English Texts will be helpful for creeds, canticles, doxologies and the Lord's Prayer. One can check the new *Episcopal Book of Common Prayer* (1976) or the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978) to see ways by which exclusive sexist language has been avoided, though less intentionality in providing language that affirms both sexes seems evident.

Acknowledging the Limits

There is bad news, too. We need to know the limits before we can do anything responsibly new in worship. There are some things we ought to do that we have not done; there are also things that we ought not to do. It is only by knowing the limits that we can get a more radical view of unexplored possibilities.

First of all, we are not free to rewrite Scripture. There is no doubt that the world view within which it was written was patriarchal. We must be careful to distinguish between those things that were culturally contingent and those things which are essential to the gospel. Paul says many things about women which reflect his culture. But he also makes what must be the most radically egalitarian statement in all of Scripture, in Galatians 3:27-28: "Baptized into union with him [Christ], you have all put on Christ

Dark Advent

+ BEGUILÉD by cold we enter winter's ark,
the sky behind us narrowing to wink.
In vain we hold a candle in this dark.

The solstice reaches in its falling arc
far as rank clouds can stretch or sun can sink.
Beguiled by cold we enter winter's ark.

We probe for life in evergreen's dry bark,
but limbs are strung with needles black as ink.
In vain we hold a candle in this dark.

We hope through laughter to engage a spark,
but ice has frozen humor's ductile link.
Beguiled by cold we enter winter's ark.

With groping faith a savior's birth we mark,
since Mary's term is ending now, we think.
In vain we hold a candle in this dark,

for virgin birth's induced by song of lark
and virgin milk is summer's warming drink.
Beguiled by cold and locked in winter's ark,
in vain we hold a candle in this dark.

KATHRYN CHRISTENSON.

as a garment. There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female; for you are all one person in Christ Jesus." This equality is based on baptism. It does not hurt to know that women baptized persons in the early church, that fonts have been designed in the shape of a pregnant woman, that womb imagery is clear in the Easter vigil, or that Calvin and Wesley, on the other hand, were vehemently opposed to women baptizing. The more we look, the more we find.

But Scripture cannot be rewritten, though it frequently deserves retranslation. *Anthropos* can be translated "human being" instead of "man," but we cannot use *anér* as anything but "man." I do not think we can change the word "Father" when it appears in Scripture. But, as indicated above, we have numerous possibilities for addressing God in prayer. I now realize it was wrong of me for many years always to begin grace at the family table with the words "Heavenly Father," especially with my three daughters and wife present. I had countless other options and never exercised them. How narrow an image of God that one ascription now implies! My images of God have grown since I began reaching out for alternatives to that invariable "Heavenly Father."

We are not free to avoid the masculinity of Jesus Christ, who, as a concrete human individual, had to have sexuality. But the important thing is not that Jesus became man but that he became human, one of us with whom every woman and man can identify. Thus the clause in the creed of the United Church of Canada, "who has come in the true Man, Jesus," no longer means what it did in 1969. The important thing is that God became human, not that God became masculine. Still, I do not yet see any alternatives to referring to the second member of the Trinity as "he" or "him."

God-Talk and People-Talk

Okay, those are the limits; but what are some of the possibilities in actual worship language? Pronouns give us the most trouble. Many times our prayers would be greatly improved by rigorous excision of any third-person pronouns. Simply say "you" when speaking of God, and in almost all cases it will be a better prayer by being made vocative. Of course, this language will not work in parts of the service not addressed to God. Here we can change "God . . . he" to "God . . . God" or to some such naming as "God . . . our Sovereign." "God . . . his" can give way to "God . . . God's" or some such possessive as "God . . . our Sovereign's." The really difficult pronoun is the reflexive. I have turned "God . . . himself" into "God . . . Godself." I admit I do not like neologisms, but I find that, with use, "Godself" becomes less abrasive and reminds me that I am speaking of a God who is more than masculine. The easy way is to avoid the reflexive



altogether, but I am fond of speaking of God as giving Godself to us (as in the sacraments), and nothing other than a reflexive is strong enough to say that adequately.

With regard to humans, we have many possibilities. I do not find it strained to double pronouns; I do not mind saying "he or she" or "hers or his," or "him or her" every time a third-person pronoun is necessary. I do not like "he/she" or "s/he," as one does not speak slashes. Written language, in my opinion, should correspond with spoken, not vice versa.

There is also a wide variety of instances in which it is not awkward to say "women and men." In Chaucer's time the words "brethren" and "sistren" were both used, but the latter was lost (about 1550), to our impoverishment. More inclusive terms ought to be used if it is clear that such is intended ("poet" and "Jew" rather than "poetess" and "Jewess," which happen to be diminutives). Words that now clearly indicate sex ("man," "mankind") should be balanced with their parallels ("woman," "woman-kind"). If such exclusive terms cannot be balanced, then it is better to avoid them in preference for single inclusive terms such as "people" and "humanity."

It should be clear that we have just begun to explore new possibilities both in God-talk and people-talk. There are no ready-made answers. Some things will sound awkward for a while, just as, not so long ago, addressing God as "you" did. Familiarity soon makes novelties sound natural. "Godself" may not bother us for long, or we may find a better reflexive. But I am convinced that we cannot remain content with "God himself" much longer.

A search which begins because of the imperative of justice may have major side effects in helping us come to a more profound knowledge of God and the

people of God. Such a search can stretch our concepts and understanding of God in unexpected ways. And it can put us in deeper contact with our own humanity. We may find that, in trying to give others their due, we ourselves receive as much in return. The concern about sexist language is a major means for changing attitudes.

There are plenty of nonverbal changes needed in worship—some as elementary as moving beyond

preaching robes with padded shoulders (an irrelevant masculine image of ministry), using women and children as ushers, and electing female bishops. But words are certainly among our most important formative elements. The present birth pangs of the church are a sign of health. We must move to language that affirms both women and men. Together, both constitute the world that Christ came to save. ☐

home, good, obedient to husbands. (Titus 2:4)

It has not been publicly stated (in this position paper) that the women's movement rejects the Bible concept of God, Christ, the church and the home. It is now known that a Bible believer could not be a part of this movement. It is time for the great majority of women to let it be known that these latter day prophets of the Women's Liberation Movement do not speak for them.

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good tidings of great joy:

biblical faith without SEXISM

Phyllis Tribble

BIBLICAL FAITH CHALLENGES the faithful to explore treasures old and new. In this context I propose to examine interactions between the Hebrew Scriptures and the Women's Liberation Movement. Unlike some commentators, I believe that the two phenomena have something to say to each other. Unlike others, I do not think that the relationship between the two need be hostile. The intentionality of biblical faith—as distinguished from a description of biblical religion—is neither to create nor to perpetuate patriarchy but rather to function as salvation for both women and men. Thus the hermeneutical challenge is to translate faith without sexism.

One approach to this translation is through themes that implicitly disavow sexism. I suggest three such themes: (1) Israel's theological understanding of Yahweh as a deity beyond sexuality. Unlike fertility gods, Yahweh is neither male nor female but Creator and Lord who embraces and transcends both sexes. (2) The theme of freedom from oppression that the Exodus narratives present so compellingly. Of special interest are the women who nurture this revolution: Hebrew midwives, an Egyptian princess with her maidens, and Hebrew slaves, mother and daughter, unite to defy Pharaoh, the male oppressor. Alone they take the initiative that leads to deliverance (Exodus 1:15-2:10). (3) An understanding of corporate personality is appropriate for eliminating sexism. The oppression of one

individual or one group is the oppression of all individuals and all groups. Conversely, the liberation of one sex is the freedom of the other.

Exegesis: Genesis 2-3

Another approach to this translation is the exegesis of passages specifically concerned with female and male. The story of creation and fall in Genesis 2-3 is one such passage.

Ambiguity characterizes the meaning of 'adham in Genesis 2-3. On the one hand, man is the first creature formed (2:7). The Lord God puts him in the garden "to till it and keep it," a job identified with the male (cf. 3:17-19). On the other hand, 'adham is a generic term for humankind. In commanding 'adham not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the Deity is speaking to both the man and the woman (2:16-17). Until the differentiation of female and male (2:21-23), 'adham is basically androgynous: one creature incorporating two sexes.

Concern for sexuality, specifically for the creation of woman, comes last in the story, after the making of the garden, the trees and the animals. Some commentators allege female subordination based on this order of events. But the last may be first, as both the biblical theologian and the literary critic know. In Hebrew literature the central concerns of a unit often appear at the beginning and the end as an

inclusio device. Genesis 2 evinces this structure. The creation of man first and of woman last constitutes a ring composition whereby the two creatures are parallel. In no way does the order disparage woman. Content and context augment this reading.

The context for the advent of woman is a divine judgment: "It is not good that 'adham should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (2:18). The phrase needing explication is "helper fit for him." In the Old Testament the word helper (*ezer*) has many usages. In our story it describes the animals and the woman. In some passages it characterizes Deity. As the helper of Israel, Yahweh creates and saves (Exodus 18:4; Deut. 33:7; Psalm 121:2). Thus *ezer* is a relational term; it designates a beneficial relationship; and it pertains to God, people and animals. By itself the word does not specify positions within relationships; more particularly, it does not imply inferiority. Position results from additional content or from context.

Accordingly, what kind of relationship does *ezer* entail in Genesis 2:18, 20? Our answer comes in two ways: (1) the word *neged*, which joins *ezer*, connotes equality; a helper who is a counterpart. (2) The animals are helpers, but they fail to fit *'adham*. There is physical, perhaps psychic, rapport between *'adham* and the animals, for Yahweh forms them both out of the ground (*'adamah*). Yet their similarity is not equality. *'Adham* names them and thereby exercises power over them. No fit helper is among them. And thus the narrative moves to woman. My translation is this: God is the helper superior to man; the animals are helpers inferior to man; woman is the helper equal to man.

In creating woman the Lord God "caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man." Man has no part in making woman; he is out of it. He exercises no control over her existence. He is neither participant nor spectator nor consultant at her birth. Like man, woman owes her life solely to God. For both of them the origin of life is a divine mystery.

Another parallel of equality is creation out of raw materials: dust for man and a "rib" (side?) for woman. Yahweh chooses these fragile materials and processes them before human beings happen. As Yahweh shapes dust and then breathes into it to form man, so Yahweh takes out the "rib" and then builds it into woman. To call woman "Adam's rib" is to misread the text, which states clearly that the extracted material required divine labor to become female, a datum scarcely designed to bolster the male ego.

Moreover, to claim that the "rib" means inferiority or subordination is to assign the man qualities

over the woman that are not in the narrative itself. Superiority, strength, aggressiveness, dominance and power do not characterize man in Genesis 2. By contrast he is formed from dirt; his life hangs by a breath that he does not control; and he remains silent and passive while the Deity shapes his existence.

The "rib" means solidarity and equality. *'Adham* recognizes this meaning in a poem:

*This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh.
She shall be called woman ('ishshah)
because she was taken out of man ('ish) (2:23).*

The pun proclaims both the similarity and the differentiation of female and male. Before this episode the Yahwist has used exclusively the generic term *'adham*. Only with the specific creation of woman (*'ishshah*) does the first specific term for man as male (*'ish*) appear. In other words, sexuality is simultaneous for woman and man. The sexes are interrelated and interdependent. Man as male does not precede woman as female but happens concurrently with her. Hence, the first act is the creation of androgyny (2:7), and the last is the creation of sexuality (2:23). In responding to the woman, man speaks for the first time and for the first time discovers himself as male. No longer a passive creature, *'ish* comes alive in meeting *'ishshah*.

Next the differences that spell harmony and equality yield to the differences of disobedience and disaster. The serpent speaks to the woman. Why to the woman and not to the man? The simplest answer is that we do not know. The Yahwist does not tell us any more than he explains why the tree of knowledge of good and evil was in the garden. But the silence of the text stimulates speculations, many

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A Female Speculates

Let a female speculate. If the serpent is "more subtle" than its fellow creatures, the woman is more appealing than her husband. Throughout the myth she is the more intelligent one, the more aggressive one and the one with greater sensibilities. Perhaps the woman elevates the animal world by conversing theologically with the serpent. At any rate, she understands the hermeneutical task. In quoting God she interprets the prohibition ("neither shall you touch it"). The woman is both theologian and translator. She contemplates the tree, taking into account all the possibilities. The tree is good for food; it satisfies the physical drives. It pleases the eyes; it is aesthetically and emotionally desirable. Above all, it is covered as the source of wisdom.

Thus the woman is fully aware when she acts, her vision encompassing the gamut of life. She takes the fruit and she eats. The initiative and the decision are hers alone. She seeks neither her husband's advice nor his permission. She acts independently. By contrast the man is a silent and bland recipient: "She also gave some to her husband and he ate." The narrator makes no attempt to depict the husband as reluctant or hesitating. The man does not theologize; he does not contemplate; he does not envision the full possibilities of the occasion. His one act is belly-oriented, and it is an act of quiescence, not of initiative. The man is not dominant; he is not aggressive; he is not a decision-maker.

Even though the prohibition not to eat of the tree appears before the female was specifically created, she knows that it applies to her. She has interpreted it, and now she struggles with the temptation to disobey. But not the man, to whom the prohibition came directly (2:6). He follows his wife without question or comment, thereby denying his own individuality. If the woman be intelligent, sensitive and ingenious, the man is passive, brutish and inept. These character portrayals are truly extraordinary in a culture dominated by men. I stress their contrast not to promote female chauvinism but to undercut patriarchal interpretations alien to the text.

The contrast between woman and man fades after their acts of disobedience. They are one in the new knowledge of their nakedness (3:7). They are one in hearing and in hiding. They flee from the sound of the Lord God in the garden (3:8): First to the man come questions of responsibility (3:9, 11), but

the man fails to be responsible: "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate" (3:12). Here the man does not blame the woman; he does not say that the woman seduced him; he blames the Deity.

If the Yahwist intended to make woman the temptress, he missed a choice opportunity. The woman's response supports the point. "The serpent beguiled me and I ate" (3:13). Only here occurs the strong verb *nsh'*, meaning to deceive, to seduce. God accepts this subject-verb combination when, immediately following the woman's accusations, Yahweh says to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all animals" (3:14).

Though the tempter (the serpent) is cursed, the woman and the man are not. But they are judged, and the judgments are commentaries on the disastrous effects of their shared disobedience. They show how terrible human life has become as it stands between creation and grace. We misread if we assume that these judgments are mandates. They describe; they do not prescribe. They protest; they do not condone.

Of special concern are the words telling the woman that her husband shall rule over her (3:16). This statement is not license for male supremacy; rather it is condemnation of that very pattern. Subjugation and supremacy are perversions of creation. Through disobedience the woman has become slave. Her initiative and her freedom vanish. The man is corrupted also, for he has become master, ruling over the one who is his God-given equal. The subordination of female to male signifies their shared sin. This sin vitiates all relationships; between animals and human beings (3:15); mothers and children (3:16); husbands and wives (3:16); man and the soil (3:17, 18); man and his work (3:19). Whereas in creation man and woman know harmony and equality, in sin they know alienation and discord. Grace makes possible a new beginning.

A further observation about these judgments: they are culturally conditioned. Husband and work (child-bearing) define the woman; wife and work (farming) define the man. A literal reading of the story limits both creatures, and it limits the story. To be faithful translators we must recognize that women as well as men move beyond these culturally defined roles, even as the intentionality and function of the myth move beyond its original setting. Whatever forms stereotyping takes in our own culture, they are judgments upon our common sin and disobedience. They are marks of our fall, not of our creation. What then shall we do?

Exegesis: Song of Songs

The Song of Songs provides at least a partial answer. In it the Paradise described in Genesis 2 and destroyed in Genesis 3 has been regained, expanded and improved upon.

Canticles begins with woman speaking. She initiates love-making:

*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,
for your love is sweeter than wine (1:2).*

In this first poem (1:2-6) she calls herself keeper of vineyards (1:6). In the last poem (8:4-14) she returns to this motif (8:12), even as she concludes the unit by summoning her beloved (8:14). Thus the overall structure of the Song is a ring composition showing the prominence of the female. Within this design another *inclusio* emphasizes women. The daughters of Jerusalem commence and close the second poem (2:7 and 3:5).

As in Genesis 2-3, the ring composition of the Song of Songs encircles a garden. Person and place blend in this imagery.

*Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its
choicest fruit (4:16c).*

The woman is the garden (4:10-15), and to the garden her lover comes (5:1, 6:2, 11). Together they enjoy this place of sensuous delight. Many trees adorn their garden, trees pleasant to the sight and good for food (cf. Gen. 2:9 and Song of Songs 2:3). Fountains of living water enhance further this site (4:12, 15), inviting comparisons with the subterranean stream watering the earth (Gen. 2:6) and with the rivers flowing out of Eden to water the garden (Gen. 2:10-14).

Animals inhabit two gardens. In the first they were formed, both beasts and birds, and received their names. As foils they participated in the creation of woman and provided a context for the total joy of 'ish and 'ishshah. In Canticles their names become explicit as does their contextual and metaphorical participation in the encounters of lovers (see 2:9; 4:1-2, 5; 5:11-12).

Work also belongs both to the garden of creation and to the garden of eroticism. Clearly man works in Eden and implicitly woman too. The Song alters this emphasis. The woman definitely works. She keeps vineyards (1:6; cf. 8:12), and she pastures flocks (1:8). Her lover may be a shepherd too (1:7), though the text does not secure this meaning. By analogy he is a king (1:4, 12; 8:11, 12), but he neither rules nor dispenses wisdom. He provides luxury for the sake of love (3:9-11).

Together Genesis 2 and the Song of Songs affirm work in gardens of joy, and together they suggest fluidity in the occupational roles of woman and man. In Canticles nature and work are pleasures leading to love, as indeed they were before the primeval couple disobeyed and caused the ground to bring forth thorns and thistles, and work to become pain and sweat (2:15; 3:16, 18, 19).

Parental references merit special attention. Seven times the lovers speak of mother, but not once do they mention father. The man calls his beloved the special child of the mother who bore her (6:9), even as the woman cites the travail of the mother who bore him (8:5). This concern with birth is also reminiscent of the theme of creation in Genesis 2. In yearning for closeness with her lover, the woman wishes he were a brother nursing at the breast of her mother (8:1).

But these traditional images do not exhaust the meaning of mother. It is his mother who crowns Solomon on the day of his wedding (3:11). The female lover identifies her brothers as sons of her mother, not of her father (1:6). And most telling of all, the woman leads her lover to the "house of her mother" (3:4; 8:2). Neither the action nor the phrase bespeaks patriarchy. This strong matriarchal

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coloring in the Song of Songs recalls the primeval man leaving his father and his mother to cleave to his wife (Gen. 2:24; cf. Gen. 24:28; Ruth 1:8).

Like Genesis 2, Canticles affirms mutuality of the sexes. There is no male dominance, no female subordination and no stereotyping of either sex. The woman is independent, fully the equal of the man. Her interests, work and words defy the connotations of "second sex." Unlike the first woman, this one is not a wife. Her love does not include procreation. At times the man approaches her, and at other times she initiates their meetings (3:1-4). Each lover exalts the physical beauty and charm of the other in language candid and covert. Their metaphorical speech reveals even as it conceals. They treat each other with tenderness and respect, for they are sexual lovers, not sexual objects. They neither exploit nor escape sex; they embrace and enjoy it. Both are naked, and they are not ashamed (cf. Gen. 2:25).

On occasion the woman expresses their relationship by the formula, "My beloved is mine, and I am his" (2:16; 6:3). Once she says, "I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me" (7:10). The word "desire" occurs only three times in the Old Testament: once in Canticles and twice in the Yahwist Epic (Gen. 3:16; 4:7). "Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" is the divine judgment upon the woman. As we have seen, its context is sin and perversion. Desire in the Song of Songs reverses this meaning of the male-female relationship. Here desire is joy, not judgment. Moreover, the possessive reference has switched from the wife's desire for her husband to the desire of the male lover for the female. Has one mark of sin in Eden been overcome here in another garden with the recovery of mutuality in love? Male dominance is totally alien to Canticles. Can it be that grace is present?

Let us stress that these lovers are not the primeval couple living before the advent of disobedience. Nor are they an eschatological couple. They live in the "terror of history" (Eliade), but their love knows not that terror. If death did not swallow the primeval couple, neither does it overpower the historical couple. "Love is strong as death" (8:6). The poetry speaks triumphantly to all terror when it affirms that not even the primeval waters of chaos can destroy love:

*Many waters cannot quench love (ahabah),
neither can floods drown it (8:7).*

In many ways, then, Song of Songs is a midrash on Genesis 2-3. By variations and reversals it creatively actualizes major motifs and themes of the primeval myth. Female and male are born to mutuality and love. They are naked without shame; they are equal without duplication. They live in gardens

where nature joins in celebrating their oneness. Neither couple fits the rhetoric of a male-dominated culture. As equals they confront life and death. But the first couple lose their oneness through disobedience. Consequently, the woman's desire becomes the man's dominion. The second couple affirm their oneness through eroticism. Consequently, the man's desire becomes the woman's delight. Whatever else it may be, Canticles is a commentary on Genesis 2-3. Paradise Lost is Paradise Regained.

Yet the midrash is incomplete. Even though Song of Songs is the poetry of history, it speaks not at all of sin and disobedience. Life knows no prohibitions. And, most strikingly, no Deity acts in that history. God is not explicitly acknowledged as either present or absent (though eroticism itself may be worship in the context of grace). Some may conclude that these omissions make the setting of Canticles a more desirable paradise than Eden. But the silences portend the limits. If we cannot return to the primeval garden (Gen. 3:23-24), we cannot live solely in the garden of eroticism. Juxtaposing the two passages, we can appropriate both for our present concern.

Suffice it to conclude that the Hebrew Scriptures and the Women's Liberation Movement do meet and that their encounter need not be hostile. Alongside Genesis 2-3 and the Song of Songs we place the themes of the nature of Yahweh, of the Exodus and of corporate personality. In various ways these themes and passages demonstrate a depatriarchalizing principle in the Hebrew Bible. Depatriarchalizing is not an operation that the exegete performs on the text. It is a hermeneutic operating within Scripture itself. We expose it; we do not impose it.

Tradition history teaches that the meaning and function of biblical materials is fluid. As Scripture moves through history, it is appropriated for new settings. Varied and diverse traditions appear, disappear and reappear from occasion to occasion. We shall be unfaithful readers if we neglect biblical passages that break with patriarchy or if we permit our interpretations to freeze in a patriarchal box of our own construction. For our day we need to perceive the depatriarchalizing principle, to recover it in those texts and themes where it is present and to accent it in our translations. Therein we shall be explorers who embrace both old and new in the pilgrimage of faith. □



10

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Thus the woman is fully aware when she acts, her vision encompassing the gamut of life. She takes the fruit and she eats. The initiative and the decision are hers alone. She seeks neither her husband's advice nor his permission. She acts independently. By contrast the man is a silent and bland recipient: "She also gave some to her husband and he ate." The narrator makes no attempt to depict the husband as reluctant or hesitating. The man does not theologize; he does not contemplate; he does not envision the full possibilities of the occasion. His one act is belly-oriented, and it is an act of quiescence, not of initiative. The man is not dominant; he is not aggressive; he is not a decision-maker.

Even though the prohibition not to eat of the tree appears before the female was specifically created, she knows that it applies to her. She has interpreted it, and now she struggles with the temptation to disobey. But not the man, to whom the prohibition came directly (2:6). He follows his wife without question or comment, thereby denying his own individuality. If the woman be intelligent, sensitive and ingenious, the man is passive, brutish and inept. These character portrayals are truly extraordinary in a culture dominated by men. I stress their contrast not to promote female chauvinism but to undercut patriarchal interpretations alien to the text.

The contrast between woman and man fades after their acts of disobedience. They are one in the new knowledge of their nakedness (3:7). They are one in hearing and in hiding. They flee from the sound of the Lord God in the garden (3:8). First to the man come questions of responsibility (3:9, 11), but

the man fails to be responsible: "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate" (3:12). Here the man does not blame the woman; he does not say that the woman seduced him; he blames the Deity.

If the Yahwist intended to make woman the temptress, he missed a choice opportunity. The woman's response supports the point. "The serpent beguiled me and I ate" (3:13). Only here occurs the strong verb *nsh'*, meaning to deceive, to seduce. God accepts this subject-verb combination when, immediately following the woman's accusations, Yahweh says to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all animals" (3:14).

Though the tempter (the serpent) is cursed, the woman and the man are not. But they are judged, and the judgments are commentaries on the disastrous effects of their shared disobedience. They show how terrible human life has become as it stands between creation and grace. We misread if we assume that these judgments are mandates. They describe; they do not prescribe. They protest; they do not condone.

Of special concern are the words telling the woman that her husband shall rule over her (3:16). This statement is not license for male supremacy; rather it is condemnation of that very pattern. Subjugation and supremacy are perversions of creation. Through disobedience the woman has become slave. Her initiative and her freedom vanish. The man is corrupted also, for he has become master, ruling over the one who is his God-given equal. The subordination of female to male signifies their shared sin. This sin vitiates all relationships; between animals and human beings (3:15); mothers and children (3:16); husbands and wives (3:16); man and the soil (3:17, 18); man and his work (3:19). Whereas in creation man and woman know harmony and equality, in sin they know alienation and discord. Grace makes possible a new beginning.

A further observation about these judgments: they are culturally conditioned. Husband and work (child-bearing) define the woman; wife and work (farming) define the man. A literal reading of the story limits both creatures, and it limits the story. To be faithful translators we must recognize that women as well as men move beyond these culturally defined roles, even as the intentionality and function of the myth move beyond its original setting. Whatever forms stereotyping takes in our own culture, they are judgments upon our common sin and disobedience. They are marks of our fall, not of our creation. What then shall we do?

Exegesis: Song of Songs

The Song of Songs provides at least a partial answer. In it the Paradise described in Genesis 2 and destroyed in Genesis 3 has been regained, expanded and improved upon.

Canticles begins with woman speaking. She initiates love-making:

*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,
for your love is sweeter than wine (1:2).*

In this first poem (1:2-2:6) she calls herself keeper of vineyards (1:6). In the last poem (8:4-14) she returns to this motif (8:12), even as she concludes the unit by summoning her beloved (8:14). Thus the overall structure of the Song is a ring composition showing the prominence of the female. Within this design another *inclusio* emphasizes women. The daughters of Jerusalem commence and close the second poem (2:7 and 3:5).

As in Genesis 2-3, the ring composition of the Song of Songs encircles a garden. Person and place blend in this imagery.

*Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its
choicest fruit (4:16c).*

The woman is the garden (4:10-15), and to the garden her lover comes (5:1, 6:2, 11). Together they enjoy this place of sensuous delight. Many trees adorn their garden, trees pleasant to the sight and good for food (cf. Gen. 2:9 and Song of Songs 2:3). Fountains of living water enhance further this site (4:12, 15), inviting comparisons with the subterranean stream watering the earth (Gen. 2:6) and with the rivers flowing out of Eden to water the garden (Gen. 2:10-14).

Animals inhabit two gardens. In the first they were formed, both beasts and birds, and received their names. As foils they participated in the creation of woman and provided a context for the total joy of 'ish and 'ishshah. In Canticles their names become explicit as does their contextual and metaphorical participation in the encounters of lovers (see 2:9; 4:1-2, 5; 5:11-12).

Work also belongs both to the garden of creation and to the garden of eroticism. Clearly man works in Eden and implicitly woman too. The Song alters this emphasis. The woman definitely works. She keeps vineyards (1:6; cf. 8:12), and she pastures flocks (1:8). Her lover may be a shepherd too (1:7), though the text does not secure this meaning. By analogy he is a king (1:4, 12; 8:11, 12), but he neither rules nor dispenses wisdom. He provides luxury for the sake of love (3:9-11).

Together Genesis 2 and the Song of Songs affirm work in gardens of joy, and together they suggest fluidity in the occupational roles of woman and man. In Canticles nature and work are pleasures leading to love, as indeed they were before the primeval couple disobeyed and caused the ground to bring forth thorns and thistles, and work to become pain and sweat (2:15; 3:16, 18, 19).

Parental references merit special attention. Seven times the lovers speak of mother, but not once do they mention father. The man calls his beloved the special child of the mother who bore her (6:9), even as the woman cites the travail of the mother who bore him (8:5). This concern with birth is also reminiscent of the theme of creation in Genesis 2. In yearning for closeness with her lover, the woman wishes he were a brother nursing at the breast of her mother (8:1).

But these traditional images do not exhaust the meaning of mother. It is his mother who crowns Solomon on the day of his wedding (3:11). The female lover identifies her brothers as sons of her mother, not of her father (1:6). And most telling of all, the woman leads her lover to the "house of her mother" (3:4; 8:2). Neither the action nor the phrase bespeaks patriarchy. This strong matriarchal

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coloring in the Song of Songs recalls the primeval man leaving his father and his mother to cleave to his wife (Gen. 2:24; cf. Gen. 24:28; Ruth 1:8).

Like Genesis 2, Canticles affirms mutuality of the sexes. There is no male dominance, no female subordination and no stereotyping of either sex. The woman is independent, fully the equal of the man. Her interests, work and words defy the connotations of "second sex." Unlike the first woman, this one is not a wife. Her love does not include procreation. At times the man approaches her, and at other times she initiates their meetings (3:1-4). Each lover exalts the physical beauty and charm of the other in language candid and covert. Their metaphorical speech reveals even as it conceals. They treat each other with tenderness and respect, for they are sexual lovers, not sexual objects. They neither exploit nor escape sex; they embrace and enjoy it. Both are naked, and they are not ashamed (cf. Gen. 2:25).

On occasion the woman expresses their relationship by the formula, "My beloved is mine, and I am his" (2:16; 6:3). Once she says, "I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me" (7:10). The word "desire" occurs only three times in the Old Testament: once in Canticles and twice in the Yahwist Epic (Gen. 3:16; 4:7). "Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" is the divine judgment upon the woman. As we have seen, its context is sin and perversion. Desire in the Song of Songs reverses this meaning of the male-female relationship. Here desire is joy, not judgment. Moreover, the possessive reference has switched from the wife's desire for her husband to the desire of the male lover for the female. Has one mark of sin in Eden been overcome here in another garden with the recovery of mutuality in love? Male dominance is totally alien to Canticles. Can it be that grace is present?

Let us stress that these lovers are not the primeval couple living before the advent of disobedience. Nor are they an eschatological couple. They live in the "terror of history" (Eliade), but their love knows not that terror. If death did not swallow the primeval couple, neither does it overpower the historical couple. "Love is strong as death" (8:6). The poetry speaks triumphantly to all terror when it affirms that not even the primeval waters of chaos can destroy love:

*Many waters cannot quench love (Cahabab),
neither can floods drown it (8:7).*

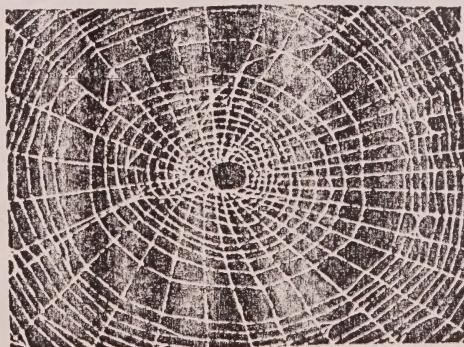
In many ways, then, Song of Songs is a midrash on Genesis 2-3. By variations and reversals it creatively actualizes major motifs and themes of the primeval myth. Female and male are born to mutuality and love. They are naked without shame; they are equal without duplication. They live in gardens

where nature joins in celebrating their oneness. Neither couple fits the rhetoric of a male-dominated culture. As equals they confront life and death. But the first couple lose their oneness through disobedience. Consequently, the woman's desire becomes the man's dominion. The second couple affirm their oneness through eroticism. Consequently, the man's desire becomes the woman's delight. Whatever else it may be, Canticles is a commentary on Genesis 2-3. Paradise Lost is Paradise Regained.

Yet the midrash is incomplete. Even though Song of Songs is the poetry of history, it speaks not at all of sin and disobedience. Life knows no prohibitions. And, most strikingly, no Deity acts in that history. God is not explicitly acknowledged as either present or absent (though eroticism itself may be worship in the context of grace). Some may conclude that these omissions make the setting of Canticles a more desirable paradise than Eden. But the silences portend the limits. If we cannot return to the primeval garden (Gen. 3:23-24), we cannot live solely in the garden of eroticism. Juxtaposing the two passages, we can appropriate both for our present concern.

Suffice it to conclude that the Hebrew Scriptures and the Women's Liberation Movement do meet and that their encounter need not be hostile. Alongside Genesis 2-3 and the Song of Songs we place the themes of the nature of Yahweh, of the Exodus and of corporate personality. In various ways these themes and passages demonstrate a depatriarchalizing principle in the Hebrew Bible. Depatriarchalizing is not an operation that the exegete performs on the text. It is a hermeneutic operating within Scripture itself. We expose it; we do not impose it.

Tradition history teaches that the meaning and function of biblical materials is fluid. As Scripture moves through history, it is appropriated for new settings. Varied and diverse traditions appear, disappear and reappear from occasion to occasion. We shall be unfaithful readers if we neglect biblical passages that break with patriarchy or if we permit our interpretations to freeze in a patriarchal box of our own construction. For our day we need to perceive the depatriarchalizing principle, to recover it in those texts and themes where it is present and to accent it in our translations. Therein we shall be explorers who embrace both old and new in the pilgrimage of faith. □



"There was more to it than that though," continued Richard. "There was the fact that Katherine had not realized fully enough the pain we feel about what is happening in the ghetto, and there was the reaction of the entire class as Leon and I began to attack Katherine. Eleanor [the white Presbyterian woman] bonded with Katherine to give her female support in the face of the attack of us males. Others retreated into silence, following the pattern of fight-flight that we learned in Professor Ashbrook's course last year. Afraid of the way we had identified ourselves as the 'black males,' the rest of the class did not dare to come to Katherine's aid. It was wrong, but we got caught up in it, and there was no way to stop it, at least not just then."

While Richard was speaking, the entire class nodded their heads, each affirming the accuracy of Richard's remarks. His words were like an exorcism, naming the demon that had pervaded the class and thus driving it out and freeing us to understand what had happened.

V

Several weeks later, I was still talking with students and reflecting on the primordial sexual forces between pulpit and pew. I have certainly had people attack my preaching, but never have I received quite the irrational, petulant treatment that is sometimes given to women and that I observed firsthand in Katherine's case. *We had to sacrifice the woman.* I cannot get Richard's

words out of my head. They make me see why people balk at feminist theology, inclusive language and women preachers.

The resistance runs deeper than a well-reasoned theological position. It is grounded in the relationship to mother. I do not say this as someone eager to be labeled "a Freudian" or wanting to point the finger at dear old mom and blame all our ills on how we were weaned and toilet-trained. But the intensity of reaction, in women and men alike, indicates that the feminist transformation of theology will have to work at even profounder levels than language and mythology. As important as these are, they remain verbal, and the resistance is coming from preverbal experience.

Yes, language and liturgy, mythology and images must change, but when people fight these changes, it will not be adequate to argue back at a rational level. The tighter knots in the soul will have to be untangled. And that means the final locus of the transformation will be in communities of men and women who care enough about each other to stay together even when the sexual forces erupt in devastating ways. Nothing less than a commitment to the Truth who is greater than all the compacted powers of our psyches can make such a community possible. In the preaching class it was the students' common loyalty to God that by a hairbreadth kept them from giving up on one another.

The assumption of authority by women in our churches is a test of our claim that there is "neither male nor female but all are one in Christ." Is this merely theological cotton candy or the steel twine of reality? If we run from the explosive sexual forces between pew and pulpit and glibly say, "Oh sure, I accept women in the ministry—I see no problems," then we will be fooling ourselves, and we will fail to see the revelations that God is making through the feminist movement.

Seminary classes and church study groups that jump on people when they resist changes in language and metaphor instead of probing where that resistance is coming from will not establish a community where there is justice regardless of sex. But if women and men together look at the recesses of their souls, trusting in the One from whom no secrets are hid, then the light will shine, and they will grow toward "mature adulthood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." □

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response in terms of a child's relationship to mother, with its explosive ambiguities of gratification and denial. Leon and Richard had in turn reacted with the childish vocal quality and fractious ranting that went beyond their comprehensible adult anger.

Leon confirmed this analysis when I walked into the dining hall for a cup of coffee. He stood up and said: "Well, are you going to give me 15 lashes?"

"I'm not in the business of giving people lashes. Why do you think I ought to be doing that to you?"

"Because of what happened in class."

"And what was it that happened in class today?"

"Oh, a lot of things were going on."

"Yes, I think a lot of things were going on. And I think we need to talk about them."

Leon agreed. That afternoon he came by my office and we talked. This time there was no child speaking but the sharp, adult intelligence that I had come to respect in Leon. He spoke to me man to man — and I use those words deliberately. He told me about his work in a prison, how "pink yarn won't tie those bitter men together," and how hurt he had been that Katherine had not dealt adequately with the fierce pain he felt about what happens to black people in prison and on the streets of the ghetto. I told Leon that if he had spoken as directly out of his experience in class and with the same passionate but mature voice, Katherine and everyone else would have heard him. I shared with him the analysis of sexual forces I had discussed with Katherine. Leon was skeptical about it, but at the end of our conversation he came back to it on his own, even though he denied its truth.

IV

During the week I had several conversations with students and with three black colleagues, trying to understand more fully what had happened. At our next class period I brought to the lecture session our current pastor-in-residence, a superb black preacher who had the respect of the entire class. We had talked extensively about what had happened earlier, and he knew the incident would probably come up in the course of his presentation on prophetic preaching. It did. First, a white male and later Katherine raised the issue, pointing out that she had tried to take a strong stand for justice, and we all knew what had happened to her. She

wanted ideas on how to handle herself in the future.

The pastor took Katherine's question seriously, pointing out that since he was not a woman he could not speak precisely to her experience, but indicating that he had often received virulent responses that were disproportionate to the sermon that set them off. He talked about "living through the pain" of those reactions and trying to understand the deeper realities that had been hooked in his listeners. Because the pastor, a black male, had addressed Katherine's question seriously, it was now a topic open to the entire class across racial lines. I built on his re-

marks and outlined the nature of the preverbal response pattern that seemed to have been touched off in class.

When I finished, Richard nodded his head in agreement and said, "Yes, I think some of that is true, that stuff from Nancy French. I think the little boy did come out in me, and I concluded with Leon and we became a little bit like a tribe, and we had to sacrifice the woman." These words in print do not convey the tone of self-realization and genuine apology that now marked Richard's voice, nor do they describe the feeling of relief that pervaded the class as Richard's acknowledgment lifted the load of gloom.

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Sacrifice

(Continued from page 108)

Eleanor, though her voice was edged with the anxiety that Leon had touched off, was trying to reintroduce Charles's more helpful tone, identifying what was good in the sermon and looking at what needed strengthening.

But Leon did not pick up on the shift in the conversation. He took off from Eleanor's criticism and lashed out, distorting what Katherine had said and missing altogether that she had spoken

to the issues of housing and medical care which he mentioned. Leon began to dominate the class. By now, his vocal quality had changed from the full-blooded anger of his earliest response to a more whining, petulant tone. It was as though he had moved from an adult's rage to a child's tantrum. The class, which had enjoyed many healthy arguments in the past, began to retreat into silence, sensing that this time conversation was no longer possible.

Richard, meanwhile, adopted Leon's angry tone. He began: "What the black

male members of this class are trying to say is . . ." I pointed out that not all the black members of the class were saying the same things. One had been silent throughout. Another, Charles, had spoken earlier but had become quiet.

III

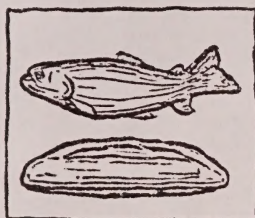
Our time was up, and people were off to other classes and appointments, except for Katherine, who stayed behind to view the videotape of her sermon. She was devastated. She had preached a good sermon that did, as she acknowledged, need to deal more with the struggle in the ghetto. But this weakness in the message was not enough to account for the disproportionate anger of the reaction. Other students had preached similar sermons with similar weaknesses, but none had awakened this kind of ranting.

What had happened?

Something primordial had come out in the all-consuming petulance that marked the closing minutes of class. I shared with Katherine the substance of a Conant lecture that Nancy French had delivered last winter.

Women in positions of authority, said French, are apt to awaken the preverbal relationship with mother. So long as they are supportive and nurturing—as Katherine was in her first sermon—those who follow them are grateful. But if the woman authority figure challenges rather than soothes, calling for sacrifice, the listeners may respond from a child's sense of having been denied gratification. Ostensibly they will deal with what was said, but in tone and manner they will reveal that the controlling emotional reality is the relationship to mother. They will be speaking as more than isolated individuals. They will be giving expression to undercurrents of thought and feeling that are rumbling through the whole group. Hence, the class response and even Katherine's sermon revealed forces greater than the motions of their individual psyches.

When I shared this idea with Katherine, she began to recover from her devastation and to analyze some of the responses of the class. "They weren't even talking about what I said. I sensed that, but I didn't know what was going on." We then looked again at her sermon for clues. The nursery rhyme and the pink yarn stood out in bold relief. Katherine, eager to develop her own style, had drawn on symbols from the feminine world that intensified the subconscious



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'We Had to Sacrifice the Woman'

Social and Sexual Forces Between Pulpit and Pew

THOMAS H. TROEGER

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses and all the king's
men
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

✦ THE WOMAN'S voice, a ball of buoyant sound, rolled effortlessly from the pulpit to the last pew of the chapel. Her eyes shone, and conviction animated her body so that her listeners felt a strong personal presence in the pulpit. As Katherine's teacher, I knew that she was trying to develop her own distinctive mode of preaching. In earlier classes she had revealed a great love for the black Baptist tradition in which she was raised. Yet she had also indicated that as a woman with a particular vision of ministry, she would be delivering sermons in a style different from that of the male preachers she had heard. It was a matter not of disowning her roots but of claiming the integrity of her witness.

"Like Humpty Dumpty, our society is in pieces, and it seems that all the king's men and all the king's horses, all our technology and all our knowledge, cannot put us back together again."

The class had responded enthusiastically to Katherine's first sermon, a nurturing message about using our different gifts in the body of Christ. But today's sermon was moving into more troubled waters.

I

"We are in pieces: Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals, men and women, blacks and whites. Today I want to look at just one of those splits, that of blacks and whites."

The issue was a live one in the chapel where Katherine preached: the class consisted of herself, five white women, four black men, and three white men. We were always working hard to help the preacher without imposing our peculiar biases and traditions on the person. So when Katherine signaled that she was going to examine the split between blacks and whites, the atmosphere thickened with the anxiety of confrontation.

"There is a pressure cooker in the ghetto." Katherine's hands began to move together as though she were trying to compress an invisible basketball that kept expanding. "Society keeps trying to pack it down. And although I do not usually consider myself a prophet of future events, I think it is going to blow to pieces in the '80s." Katherine's hands sprang apart as though a coiled spring were released, and we in the pews could feel the energy rushing toward us.

"And yet I believe there is a word of hope. This morning I want to speak about just one thing that we can do to heal the split between blacks and whites. . . . We can preach the gospel."

At this point the sermon became weaker—as Katherine herself later agreed—because it dealt in generalities and preachers' phrases without the bite of specific illustrations. However, as she moved into her conclusion, it became more pointed, naming issues of medical care and housing and employment—all problems that she had encountered in her summer ministries during seminary.

At the end Katherine came out of the pulpit carrying a ball of pink yarn. Saying she wanted to symbolize the hope and unity we had as Christians, she had us toss the ball of yarn among ourselves until we were all holding onto the unwound strand. Then Katherine led us in singing "Bless Be the Tie That Binds." At the end of the song we released the yarn and came forward to share in our response to the sermon, as we do in every class.

II

Susan, a white Unitarian who has been on the front lines for many social causes, responded first: "I just want to say that I loved the sermon. I know that's not a very helpful response. But I did. Maybe it's because I am white, and I need to hear from a black person that there is at least some kind of hope."

Charles, a black Baptist, told first what he liked in the sermon: "Its note of hope—I needed that." Then he shared his reservation: "I am afraid the sermon did not get deep enough into the pain in the ghetto. Maybe the hope came too easily to be real." Charles

identified precisely what was weak in the sermon, and his kind manner helped several other class members to share their responses.

But the mood of the class changed when another black student, Leon, said: "I felt the sermon was an attack on the black men in this class who you mentioned the 'sacrifice' involved in preaching the gospel. Blacks have been sacrificing for too long, and it is time for them to be grabbing their share of the pie." I pointed out that in fairness to Katherine, she was not talking about black people in general but about preachers, black and white alike, needing to preach the social demands of the gospel even when that might not be the popular thing to do. But the vehemence of Leon's next response indicated that we were dealing less with the content of Katherine's sermon than with the rage that fueled his speech. "I am telling you, the sermon was an attack. I felt it as an attack."

Another black student, Richard, entered the conversation—at first speaking in the same tone as Charles, critical but helpful. "I think I heard what Katherine was trying to do. She was trying to find some hope in a hopeless situation, and that is a hard thing to do. We are talking about us in Buffalo whose hearts have been hurt, children in Atlanta who are appearing. She mentioned these things but she didn't deal enough with existential pain in the situation." Her words came haltingly, gingerly, though he were aware that Leon's anger was hot enough to evaporate whatever anyone said.

At this point, Eleanor, a white Episcopalian, ten years older than Katherine, reached toward her with support. "I appreciated what you were trying to do in the sermon. We do need hope. I was thinking of some blacks I worked with this summer in my own inner-city parish, and you were right about the pressure cooker. It is ready to explode. I felt that last summer, and I felt it in my hands." Eleanor imitated Katherine's gesture with the invisible basketball. "But maybe Charles is right; you let the hope come too easily to be real."

(Continued on page 124)

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home, good, obedient to husbands. (Titus 2:4)

It has not been publicly stated (in this position paper) that the women's movement rejects the Bible concept of God, Christ, the church and the home. It is now known that a Bible believer could not be a part of this movement. It is time for the great majority of women to let it be known that these latter day prophets of the Women's Liberation Movement do not speak for them.

The women express their amazement and disgust but hear the speech out. After the preacher leaves,

they begin to question whether this attitude is not a part of the reality they will have to face when they return home. They then begin to raise questions that were never fully explored in the work group: Is women's liberation really anti-Christ? How do we deal with Christ? Is it satisfying to say that he is a feminist? Why have we avoided all week dealing with him?, etc. The refrain from Dorie Ellzey's song, "I'm in the water and the bathtub is gone," is begun again. And that is it. We are out of the Garden and in the water. Where do we go from here? □

good tidings of great joy:

biblical faith without SEXISM

Phyllis Tribble

BIBLICAL FAITH CHALLENGES the faithful to explore treasures old and new. In this context I propose to examine interactions between the Hebrew Scriptures and the Women's Liberation Movement. Unlike some commentators, I believe that the two phenomena have something to say to each other. Unlike others, I do not think that the relationship between the two need be hostile. The intentionality of biblical faith—as distinguished from a description of biblical religion—is neither to create nor to perpetuate patriarchy but rather to function as salvation for both women and men. Thus the hermeneutical challenge is to translate faith without sexism.

One approach to this translation is through themes that implicitly disavow sexism. I suggest three such themes: (1) Israel's theological understanding of Yahweh as a deity beyond sexuality. Unlike fertility gods, Yahweh is neither male nor female but Creator and Lord who embraces and transcends both sexes. (2) The theme of freedom from oppression that the Exodus narratives present so compellingly. Of special interest are the women who nurture this revolution: Hebrew midwives, an Egyptian princess with her maidens, and Hebrew slaves, mother and daughter, unite to defy Pharaoh, the male oppressor. Alone they take the initiative that leads to deliverance (Exodus 1:15-2:10). (3) An understanding of corporate personality is appropriate for eliminating sexism. The oppression of one

individual or one group is the oppression of all individuals and all groups. Conversely, the liberation of one sex is the freedom of the other.

Exegesis: Genesis 2-3

Another approach to this translation is the exegesis of passages specifically concerned with female and male. The story of creation and fall in Genesis 2-3 is one such passage.

Ambiguity characterizes the meaning of 'adham in Genesis 2-3. On the one hand, man is the first creature formed (2:7). The Lord God puts him in the garden "to till it and keep it," a job identified with the male (cf. 3:17-19). On the other hand, 'adham is a generic term for humankind. In commanding 'adham not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the Deity is speaking to both the man and the woman (2:16-17). Until the differentiation of female and male (2:21-23), 'adham is basically androgynous: one creature incorporating two sexes.

Concern for sexuality, specifically for the creation of woman, comes last in the story, after the making of the garden, the trees and the animals. Some commentators allege female subordination based on this order of events. But the last may be first, as both the biblical theologian and the literary critic know. In Hebrew literature the central concerns of a unit often appear at the beginning and the end as an

inclusio device. Genesis 2 evinces this structure. The creation of man first and of woman last constitutes a ring composition whereby the two creatures are parallel. In no way does the order disparage woman. Content and context augment this reading.

The context for the advent of woman is a divine judgment: "It is not good that 'adham should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (2:18). The phrase needing explication is "helper fit for him." In the Old Testament the word helper (*'ezer*) has many usages. In our story it describes the animals and the woman. In some passages it characterizes Deity. As the helper of Israel, Yahweh creates and saves (Exodus 18:4; Deut. 33:7; Psalm 121:2). Thus *'ezer* is a relational term; it designates a beneficial relationship; and it pertains to God, people and animals. By itself the word does not specify positions within relationships; more particularly, it does not imply inferiority. Position results from additional content or from context.

Accordingly, what kind of relationship does *'ezer* entail in Genesis 2:18, 20? Our answer comes in two ways: (1) the word *neged*, which joins *'ezer*, connotes equality: a helper who is a counterpart. (2) The animals are helpers, but they fail to fit *'adham*. There is physical, perhaps psychic, rapport between *'adham* and the animals, for Yahweh forms them both out of the ground (*'adamah*). Yet their similarity is not equality. *'Adham* names them and thereby exercises power over them. No fit helper is among them. And thus the narrative moves to woman. My translation is this: God is the helper superior to man; the animals are helpers inferior to man; woman is the helper equal to man.

In creating woman the Lord God "caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man." Man has no part in making woman; he is out of it. He exercises no control over her existence. He is neither participant nor spectator nor consultant at her birth. Like man, woman owes her life solely to God. For both of them the origin of life is a divine mystery.

Another parallel of equality is creation out of raw materials: dust for man and a "rib" (side?) for woman. Yahweh chooses these fragile materials and processes them before human beings happen. As Yahweh shapes dust and then breathes into it to form man, so Yahweh takes out the "rib" and then builds it into woman. To call woman "Adam's rib" is to misread the text, which states clearly that the extracted material required divine labor to become female, a datum scarcely designed to bolster the male ego.

Moreover, to claim that the "rib" means inferiority or subordination is to assign the man qualities

over the woman that are not in the narrative itself. Superiority, strength, aggressiveness, dominance and power do not characterize man in Genesis 2. By contrast he is formed from dirt; his life hangs by a breath that he does not control; and he remains silent and passive while the Deity shapes his existence.

The "rib" means solidarity and equality. *'Adham* recognizes this meaning in a poem:

*This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh.
She shall be called woman ('ishshah)
because she was taken out of man ('ish) (2:23).*

The pun proclaims both the similarity and the differentiation of female and male. Before this episode the Yahwist has used exclusively the generic term *'adham*. Only with the specific creation of woman (*'ishshah*) does the first specific term for man as male (*'ish*) appear. In other words, sexuality is simultaneous for woman and man. The sexes are interrelated and interdependent. Man as male does not precede woman as female but happens concurrently with her. Hence, the first act is the creation of androgyny (2:7), and the last is the creation of sexuality (2:23). In responding to the woman, man speaks for the first time and for the first time discovers himself as male. No longer a passive creature, *'ish* comes alive in meeting *'ishshah*.

Next the differences that spell harmony and equality yield to the differences of disobedience and disaster. The serpent speaks to the woman. Why to the woman and not to the man? The simplest answer is that we do not know. The Yahwist does not tell us any more than he explains why the tree of knowledge of good and evil was in the garden. But the silence of the text stimulates speculations, many

Resource Materials

are available for readers who want to explore further the issues raised by these articles. Church Women United (5820 Reading Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45237) has produced a multimedia packet on the 1972 Grailville conference. Material on the 1973 conference and a packet on women are available from Grailville, Loveland, Ohio 45140. In addition a booklet of the 1973 proceedings of the working group of women and religion of the American Academy of Religion is directly related to this issue. Copies may be ordered from CSR Executive Office, Waterloo Lutheran University, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3C5, Canada.

of, which only confirm the patriarchal mentality that conceived them.

A Female Speculates

Let a female speculate. If the serpent is "more subtle" than its fellow creatures, the woman is more appealing than her husband. Throughout the myth she is the more intelligent one, the more aggressive one and the one with greater sensibilities. Perhaps the woman elevates the animal world by conversing theologically with the serpent. At any rate, she understands the hermeneutical task. In quoting God she interprets the prohibition ("neither shall you touch it"). The woman is both theologian and translator. She contemplates the tree, taking into account all the possibilities. The tree is good for food; it satisfies the physical drives. It pleases the eyes; it is aesthetically and emotionally desirable. Above all, it is coveted as the source of wisdom.

Thus the woman is fully aware when she acts, her vision encompassing the gamut of life. She takes the fruit and she eats. The initiative and the decision are hers alone. She seeks neither her husband's advice nor his permission. She acts independently. By contrast the man is a silent and bland recipient: "She also gave some to her husband and he ate." The narrator makes no attempt to depict the husband as reluctant or hesitating. The man does not theologize; he does not contemplate; he does not envision the full possibilities of the occasion. His one act is belly-oriented, and it is an act of quiescence, not of initiative. The man is not dominant; he is not aggressive; he is not a decision-maker.

Even though the prohibition not to eat of the tree appears before the female was specifically created, she knows that it applies to her. She has interpreted it, and now she struggles with the temptation to disobey. But not the man, to whom the prohibition came directly (2:6). He follows his wife without question or comment, thereby denying his own individuality. If the woman be intelligent, sensitive and ingenious, the man is passive, brutish and inept. These character portrayals are truly extraordinary in a culture dominated by men. I stress their contrast not to promote female chauvinism but to undercut patriarchal interpretations alien to the text.

The contrast between woman and man fades after their acts of disobedience. They are one in the new knowledge of their nakedness (3:7). They are one in hearing and in hiding. They flee from the sound of the Lord God in the garden (3:8). First to the man come questions of responsibility (3:9, 11), but

the man fails to be responsible: "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate" (3:12). Here the man does not blame the woman; he does not say that the woman seduced him; he blames the Deity.

If the Yahwist intended to make woman the temptress, he missed a choice opportunity. The woman's response supports the point. "The serpent beguiled me and I ate" (3:13). Only here occurs the strong verb *nsh'*, meaning to deceive, to seduce. God accepts this subject-verb combination when, immediately following the woman's accusations, Yahweh says to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all animals" (3:14).

Though the tempter (the serpent) is cursed, the woman and the man are not. But they are judged, and the judgments are commentaries on the disastrous effects of their shared disobedience. They show how terrible human life has become as it stands between creation and grace. We misread if we assume that these judgments are mandates. They describe; they do not prescribe. They protest; they do not condone.

Of special concern are the words telling the woman that her husband shall rule over her (3:16). This statement is not license for male supremacy; rather it is condemnation of that very pattern. Subjugation and supremacy are perversions of creation. Through disobedience the woman has become slave. Her initiative and her freedom vanish. The man is corrupted also, for he has become master, ruling over the one who is his God-given equal. The subordination of female to male signifies their shared sin. This sin vitiates all relationships; between animals and human beings (3:15); mothers and children (3:16); husbands and wives (3:16); man and the soil (3:17, 18); man and his work (3:19). Whereas in creation man and woman know harmony and equality, in sin they know alienation and discord. Grace makes possible a new beginning.

A further observation about these judgments: they are culturally conditioned. Husband and work (child-bearing) define the woman; wife and work (farming) define the man. A literal reading of the story limits both creatures, and it limits the story. To be faithful translators we must recognize that women as well as men move beyond these culturally defined roles, even as the intentionality and function of the myth move beyond its original setting. Whatever forms stereotyping takes in our own culture, they are judgments upon our common sin and disobedience. They are marks of our fall, not of our creation. What then shall we do?

Exegesis: Song of Songs

The Song of Songs provides at least a partial answer. In it the Paradise described in Genesis 2 and destroyed in Genesis 3 has been regained, expanded and improved upon.

Canticles begins with woman speaking. She initiates love-making:

*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,
for your love is sweeter than wine (1:2).*

In this first poem (1:2-2:6) she calls herself keeper of vineyards (1:6). In the last poem (8:4-14) she returns to this motif (8:12), even as she concludes the unit by summoning her beloved (8:14). Thus the overall structure of the Song is a ring composition showing the prominence of the female. Within this design another *inclusio* emphasizes women. The daughters of Jerusalem commence and close the second poem (2:7 and 3:5).

As in Genesis 2-3, the ring composition of the Song of Songs encircles a garden. Person and place blend in this imagery.

*Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its
choicest fruit (4:16c).*

The woman is the garden (4:10-15), and to the garden her lover comes (5:1, 6:2, 11). Together they enjoy this place of sensuous delight. Many trees adorn their garden, trees pleasant to the sight and good for food (cf. Gen. 2:9 and Song of Songs 2:3). Fountains of living water enhance further this site (4:12, 15), inviting comparisons with the subterranean stream watering the earth (Gen. 2:6) and with the rivers flowing out of Eden to water the garden (Gen. 2:10-14).

Animals inhabit two gardens. In the first they were formed, both beasts and birds, and received their names. As foils they participated in the creation of woman and provided a context for the total joy of 'ish and 'ishshah. In Canticles their names become explicit as does their contextual and metaphorical participation in the encounters of lovers (see 2:9; 4:1-2, 5; 5:11-12).

Work also belongs both to the garden of creation and to the garden of eroticism. Clearly man works in Eden and implicitly woman too. The Song alters this emphasis. The woman definitely works. She keeps vineyards (1:6; cf. 8:12), and she pastures flocks (1:8). Her lover may be a shepherd too (1:7), though the text does not secure this meaning. By analogy he is a king (1:4, 12; 8:11, 12), but he neither rules nor dispenses wisdom. He provides luxury for the sake of love (3:9-11).

Together Genesis 2 and the Song of Songs affirm work in gardens of joy, and together they suggest fluidity in the occupational roles of woman and man. In Canticles nature and work are pleasures leading to love, as indeed they were before the primeval couple disobeyed and caused the ground to bring forth thorns and thistles, and work to become pain and sweat (2:15; 3:16, 18, 19).

Parental references merit special attention. Seven times the lovers speak of mother, but not once do they mention father. The man calls his beloved the special child of the mother who bore her (6:9), even as the woman cites the travail of the mother who bore him (8:5). This concern with birth is also reminiscent of the theme of creation in Genesis 2. In yearning for closeness with her lover, the woman wishes he were a brother nursing at the breast of her mother (8:1).

But these traditional images do not exhaust the meaning of mother. It is his mother who crowns Solomon on the day of his wedding (3:11). The female lover identifies her brothers as sons of her mother, not of her father (1:6). And most telling of all, the woman leads her lover to the "house of her mother" (3:4; 8:2). Neither the action nor the phrase bespeaks patriarchy. This strong matriarchal

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coloring in the Song of Songs recalls the primeval man leaving his father and his mother to cleave to his wife (Gen. 2:24; cf. Gen. 24:28; Ruth 1:8).

Like Genesis 2, Canticles affirms mutuality of the sexes. There is no male dominance, no female subordination and no stereotyping of either sex. The woman is independent, fully the equal of the man. Her interests, work and words defy the connotations of "second sex." Unlike the first woman, this one is not a wife. Her love does not include procreation. At times the man approaches her, and at other times she initiates their meetings (3:1-4). Each lover exalts the physical beauty and charm of the other in language candid and covert. Their metaphorical speech reveals even as it conceals. They treat each other with tenderness and respect, for they are sexual lovers, not sexual objects. They neither exploit nor escape sex; they embrace and enjoy it. Both are naked, and they are not ashamed (cf. Gen. 2:25).

On occasion the woman expresses their relationship by the formula, "My beloved is mine, and I am his" (2:16; 6:5). Once she says, "I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me" (7:10). The word "desire" occurs only three times in the Old Testament: once in Canticles and twice in the Yahwist Epic (Gen. 3:16; 4:7). "Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" is the divine judgment upon the woman. As we have seen, its context is sin and perversion. Desire in the Song of Songs reverses this meaning of the male-female relationship. Here desire is joy, not judgment. Moreover, the possessive reference has switched from the wife's desire for her husband to the desire of the male lover for the female. Has one mark of sin in Eden been overcome here in another garden with the recovery of mutuality in love? Male dominance is totally alien to Canticles. Can it be that grace is present?

Let us stress that these lovers are not the primeval couple living before the advent of disobedience. Nor are they an eschatological couple. They live in the "terror of history" (Eliade), but their love knows not that terror. If death did not swallow the primeval couple, neither does it overpower the historical couple. "Love is strong as death" (8:6). The poetry speaks triumphantly to all terror when it affirms that not even the primeval waters of chaos can destroy love:

*Many waters cannot quench love (ahabah),
neither can floods drown it (8:7).*

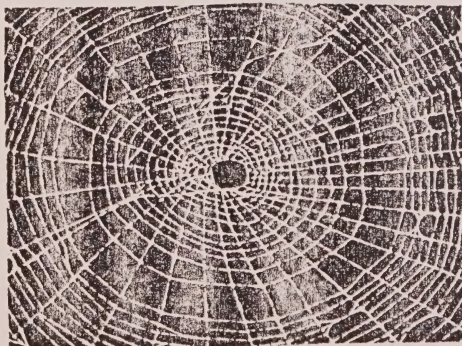
In many ways, then, Song of Songs is a midrash on Genesis 2-3. By variations and reversals it creatively actualizes major motifs and themes of the primeval myth. Female and male are born to mutuality and love. They are naked without shame; they are equal without duplication. They live in gardens

where nature joins in celebrating their oneness. Neither couple fits the rhetoric of a male-dominated culture. As equals they confront life and death. But the first couple lose their oneness through disobedience. Consequently, the woman's desire becomes the man's dominion. The second couple affirm their oneness through eroticism. Consequently, the man's desire becomes the woman's delight. Whatever else it may be, Canticles is a commentary on Genesis 2-3. Paradise Lost is Paradise Regained.

Yet the midrash is incomplete. Even though Song of Songs is the poetry of history, it speaks not at all of sin and disobedience. Life knows no prohibitions. And, most strikingly, no Deity acts in that history. God is not explicitly acknowledged as either present or absent (though eroticism itself may be worship in the context of grace). Some may conclude that these omissions make the setting of Canticles a more desirable paradise than Eden. But the silences portend the limits. If we cannot return to the primeval garden (Gen. 3:23-24), we cannot live solely in the garden of eroticism. Juxtaposing the two passages, we can appropriate both for our present concern.

Suffice it to conclude that the Hebrew Scriptures and the Women's Liberation Movement do meet and that their encounter need not be hostile. Alongside Genesis 2-3 and the Song of Songs we place the themes of the nature of Yahweh, of the Exodus and of corporate personality. In various ways these themes and passages demonstrate a depatriarchalizing principle in the Hebrew Bible. Depatriarchalizing is not an operation that the exegete performs on the text. It is a hermeneutic operating within Scripture itself. We expose it; we do not impose it.

Tradition history teaches that the meaning and function of biblical materials is fluid. As Scripture moves through history, it is appropriated for new settings. Varied and diverse traditions appear, disappear and reappear from occasion to occasion. We shall be unfaithful readers if we neglect biblical passages that break with patriarchy or if we permit our interpretations to freeze in a patriarchal box of our own construction. For our day we need to perceive the depatriarchalizing principle, to recover it in those texts and themes where it is present and to accent it in our translations. Therein we shall be explorers who embrace both old and new in the pilgrimage of faith. □





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"There was more to it than that though," continued Richard. "There was the fact that Katherine had not realized fully enough the pain we feel about what is happening in the ghetto, and there was the reaction of the entire class as Leon and I began to attack Katherine. Eleanor [the white Presbyterian woman] bonded with Katherine to give her female support in the face of the attack of us males. Others retreated into silence, following the pattern of fight-flight that we learned in Professor Ashbrook's course last year. Afraid of the way we had identified ourselves as the 'black males,' the rest of the class did not dare to come to Katherine's aid. It was wrong, but we got caught up in it, and there was no way to stop it, at least not just then."

While Richard was speaking, the entire class nodded their heads, each affirming the accuracy of Richard's remarks. His words were like an exorcism, naming the demon that had pervaded the class and thus driving it out and freeing us to understand what had happened.

V

Several weeks later, I was still talking with students and reflecting on the primordial sexual forces between pulpit and pew. I have certainly had people attack my preaching, but never have I received quite the irrational, petulant treatment that is sometimes given to women and that I observed firsthand in Katherine's case. *We had to sacrifice the woman.* I cannot get Richard's

words out of my head. They make me see why people balk at feminist theology, inclusive language and women preachers.

The resistance runs deeper than a well-reasoned theological position. It is grounded in the relationship to mother. I do not say this as someone eager to be labeled "a Freudian" or wanting to point the finger at dear old mom and blame all our ills on how we were weaned and toilet-trained. But the intensity of reaction, in women and men alike, indicates that the feminist transformation of theology will have to work at even profounder levels than language and mythology. As important as these are, they remain verbal, and the resistance is coming from preverbal experience.

Yes, language and liturgy, mythology and images must change, but when people fight these changes, it will not be adequate to argue back at a rational level. The tighter knots in the soul will have to be untangled. And that means the final locus of the transformation will be in communities of men and women who care enough about each other to stay together even when the sexual forces erupt in devastating ways. Nothing less than a commitment to the Truth who is greater than all the compacted powers of our psyches can make such a community possible. In the preaching class it was the students' common loyalty to God that by a hairbreadth kept them from giving up on one another.

The assumption of authority by women in our churches is a test of our claim that there is "neither male nor female but all are one in Christ." Is this merely theological cotton candy or the steel twine of reality? If we run from the explosive sexual forces between pew and pulpit and glibly say, "Oh sure, I accept women in the ministry—I see no problems," then we will be fooling ourselves, and we will fail to see the revelations that God is making through the feminist movement.

Seminary classes and church study groups that jump on people when they resist changes in language and metaphor instead of probing where that resistance is coming from will not establish a community where there is justice regardless of sex. But if women and men together look at the recesses of their souls, trusting in the One from whom no secrets are hid, then the light will shine, and they will grow toward "mature adulthood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." □

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response in terms of a child's relationship to mother, with its explosive ambiguities of gratification and denial. Leon and Richard had in turn reacted with the childish vocal quality and fractious ranting that went beyond their comprehensible adult anger.

Leon confirmed this analysis when I walked into the dining hall for a cup of coffee. He stood up and said: "Well, are you going to give me 15 lashes?"

"I'm not in the business of giving people lashes. Why do you think I ought to be doing that to you?"

"Because of what happened in class."

"And what was it that happened in class today?"

"Oh, a lot of things were going on."

"Yes, I think a lot of things were going on. And I think we need to talk about them."

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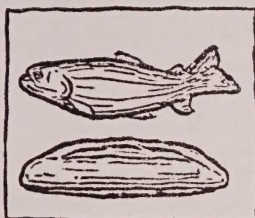
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'We Had to Sacrifice the Woman'

Social and Sexual Forces Between Pulpit and Pew

THOMAS H. TROEGER

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses and all the king's
men
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

♦ THE WOMAN'S voice, a ball of buoyant sound, rolled effortlessly from the pulpit to the last pew of the chapel. Her eyes shone, and conviction animated her body so that her listeners felt a strong personal presence in the pulpit. As Katherine's teacher, I knew that she was trying to develop her own distinctive mode of preaching. In earlier classes she had revealed a great love for the black Baptist tradition in which she was raised. Yet she had also indicated that as a woman with a particular vision of ministry, she would be delivering sermons in a style different from that of the male preachers she had heard. It was a matter not of disowning her roots but of claiming the integrity of her witness.

"Like Humpty Dumpty, our society is in pieces, and it seems that all the king's men and all the king's horses, all our technology and all our knowledge, cannot put us back together again."

The class had responded enthusiastically to Katherine's first sermon, a nurturing message about using our different gifts in the body of Christ. But today's sermon was moving into more troubled waters.

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"We are in pieces: Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals, men and women, blacks and whites. Today I want to look at just one of those splits, that of blacks and whites."

The issue was a live one in the chapel where Katherine preached: the class consisted of herself, five white women, four black men, and three white men. We were always working hard to help the preacher without imposing our peculiar biases and traditions on the person. So when Katherine signaled that she was going to examine the split between blacks and whites, the atmosphere thickened with the anxiety of confrontation.

Dr. Troeger is professor of preaching and parish at Colgate Rochester/Bexley Hall/Crozer Theological Seminary.

"There is a pressure cooker in the ghetto." Katherine's hands began to move together as though she were trying to compress an invisible basketball that kept expanding. "Society keeps trying to pack it down. And although I do not usually consider myself a prophet of future events, I think it is going to blow to pieces in the '80s." Katherine's hands sprang apart as though a coiled spring were released, and we in the pews could feel the energy rushing toward us.

"And yet I believe there is a word of hope. This morning I want to speak about just one thing that we can do to heal the split between blacks and whites. . . . We can preach the gospel."

At this point the sermon became weaker—as Katherine herself later agreed—because it dealt in generalities and preachers' phrases without the bite of specific illustrations. However, as she moved into her conclusion, it became more pointed, naming issues of medical care and housing and employment—all problems that she had encountered in her summer ministries during seminary.

At the end Katherine came out of the pulpit carrying a ball of pink yarn. Saying she wanted to symbolize the hope and unity we had as Christians, she had us toss the ball of yarn among ourselves until we were all holding onto the unwound strand. Then Katherine led us in singing "Bless Be the Tie That Binds." At the end of the song we released the yarn and came forward to share in our response to the sermon, as we do in every class.

II

Susan, a white Unitarian who has been on the front lines for many social causes, responded first: "I just want to say that I loved the sermon. I know that's not a very helpful response. But I did. Maybe it's because I am white, and I need to hear from a black person that there is at least some kind of hope."

Charles, a black Baptist, told first what he liked in the sermon: "Its note of hope—I needed that." Then he shared his reservation: "I am afraid the sermon did not get deep enough into the pain in the ghetto. Maybe the hope came too easily to be real." Charles

identified precisely what was weak in the sermon, and his kind manner helped several other class members share their responses.

But the mood of the class changed when another black student, Leon, said: "I felt the sermon was an attack on the black men in this class who you mentioned the 'sacrifice' involved in preaching the gospel. Blacks have been sacrificing for too long, and it's time for them to be grabbing their share of the pie." I pointed out that in fairness to Katherine, she was not talking about black people in general but about preachers, black and white alike, needing to preach the social commands of the gospel even when that might not be the popular thing to do. But the vehemence of Leon's next response indicated that we were dealing less with the content of Katherine's sermon than with the rage that fueled his speech. "I am telling you, the sermon was an attack. I felt it as an attack."

Another black student, Richard, entered the conversation—at first speaking in the same tone as Charles, critical but helpful. "I think I heard what Katherine was trying to do. She was trying to find some hope in a hopeless situation, and that is a hard thing to do. We are talking about us in Buffalo whose hearts have been hurt, children in Atlanta who are not appearing. She mentioned these things but she didn't deal enough with the existential pain in the situation." Words came haltingly, gingerly, though he was aware that Leon's anger was hot enough to evaporate whatever anyone said.

At this point, Eleanor, a white Episcopalian, ten years older than Katherine, reached toward her with support. "I appreciated what you were trying to do in the sermon. We do need hope. I was thinking of some blacks I know with this summer in my own inner-city parish, and you were right about the pressure cooker. It is ready to explode that last summer, and I felt it in my hands." Eleanor imitated Katherine's gesture with the invisible basketball. "But maybe Charles is right; you the hope come too easily to be real."

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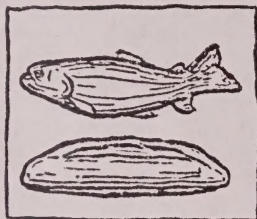
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response in terms of a child's relationship to mother, with its explosive ambiguities of gratification and denial. Leon and Richard had in turn reacted with the childish vocal quality and fractious ranting that went beyond their comprehensible adult anger.

Leon confirmed this analysis when I walked into the dining hall for a cup of coffee. He stood up and said: "Well, are you going to give me 15 lashes?"

"I'm not in the business of giving people lashes. Why do you think I ought to be doing that to you?"

"Because of what happened in class."

"And what was it that happened in class today?"

"Oh, a lot of things were going on."

"Yes, I think a lot of things were going on. And I think we need to talk about them."

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"There was more to it than that though," continued Richard. "There was the fact that Katherine had not realized fully enough the pain we feel about what is happening in the ghetto, and there was the reaction of the entire class as Leon and I began to attack Katherine. Eleanor [the white Presbyterian woman] bonded with Katherine to give her female support in the face of the attack of us males. Others retreated into silence, following the pattern of fight-flight that we learned in Professor Ashbrook's course last year. Afraid of the way we had identified ourselves as the 'black males,' the rest of the class did not dare to come to Katherine's aid. It was wrong, but we got caught up in it, and there was no way to stop it, at least not just then."

While Richard was speaking, the entire class nodded their heads, each affirming the accuracy of Richard's remarks. His words were like an exorcism, naming the demon that had pervaded the class and thus driving it out and freeing us to understand what had happened.

V

Several weeks later, I was still talking with students and reflecting on the primordial sexual forces between pulpit and pew. I have certainly had people attack my preaching, but never have I received quite the irrational, petulant treatment that is sometimes given to women and that I observed firsthand in Katherine's case. *We had to sacrifice the woman.* I cannot get Richard's

words out of my head. They make me see why people balk at feminist theology, inclusive language and women preachers.

The resistance runs deeper than a well-reasoned theological position. It is grounded in the relationship to mother. I do not say this as someone eager to be labeled "a Freudian" or wanting to point the finger at dear old mom and blame all our ills on how we were weaned and toilet-trained. But the intensity of reaction, in women and men alike, indicates that the feminist transformation of theology will have to work at even profounder levels than language and mythology. As important as these are, they remain verbal, and the resistance is coming from preverbal experience.

Yes, language and liturgy, mythology and images must change, but when people fight these changes, it will not be adequate to argue back at a rational level. The tighter knots in the soul will have to be untangled. And that means the final locus of the transformation will be in communities of men and women who care enough about each other to stay together even when the sexual forces erupt in devastating ways. Nothing less than a commitment to the Truth who is greater than all the compacted powers of our psyches can make such a community possible. In the preaching class it was the students' common loyalty to God that by a hairbreadth kept them from giving up on one another.

The assumption of authority by women in our churches is a test of our claim that there is "neither male nor female but all are one in Christ." Is this merely theological cotton candy or the steel twine of reality? If we run from the explosive sexual forces between pew and pulpit and glibly say, "Oh sure, I accept women in the ministry—I see no problems," then we will be fooling ourselves, and we will fail to see the revelations that God is making through the feminist movement.

Seminary classes and church study groups that jump on people when they resist changes in language and metaphor instead of probing where that resistance is coming from will not establish a community where there is justice regardless of sex. But if women and men together look at the recesses of their souls, trusting in the One from whom no secrets are hid, then the light will shine, and they will grow toward "mature adulthood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." □

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The Words of Worship: Beyond Liturgical Sexism

Our growing awareness of the sexist problems inherent in our language provides us with a valuable new hermeneutical tool.

JAMES F. WHITE

★ THE PROBLEM of sexist language in worship has caught up with us; there is no avoiding it any longer, though I still hear many evasions. The most common excuse: "Language is not that important." My usual rejoinder: "How long has it been since you last used the term 'nigger'?" So long as someone uses that less-than-human term for a black person, it is impossible for him or her to progress toward racial justice. Language is not an indifferent matter, as Earl Butz discovered. A change in speech habits is necessary if we are to change attitudes.

No longer do we have a choice to be concerned or not about sexist language. A fundamental issue of justice is involved, and the church cannot be silent in matters of justice without being a disobedient church. Obedience to Christ means according justice to others just as we desire justice for ourselves. To determine what constitutes justice in this instance, to be sure, may not be simple, but we should have little difficulty in agreeing that an obedient church has no choice about opposing injustice.

The importance of public worship in this matter is only slightly less obvious. Nowhere else does the average Christian so frequently take part in explicit theological statements and actions as in Christian worship. Nothing helps form a Christian's thinking about God and one's responsibility to others so persistently as continued engagement in public worship. Worship shapes the theology of the laity through the weekly repetition of constant elements of worship plus unique local and temporal elaborations of them by the gathered community.

Feminine Images

Let us begin with the good news. Our growing awareness of the sexist problems inherent in language provides us with a valuable new hermeneutical tool. It opens to us aspects of God's word to which we have hitherto been deaf and provides us with a deeper sensitivity for hearing what God says through Scripture. One soon realizes the importance of accurate biblical translations. Frequently the original texts make no indication of gender; it has been supplied gratuitously by translators. This is

true of the pronoun *tis*, often translated "a man" instead of "anyone." In many cases, sexual distinctions have been dubbed in for the sake of readability by modern translators when these distinctions do not exist in original texts. More nearly accurate translations would not make such arbitrary distinctions. Such knowledge ought to be an incentive to more intensive study of the Scriptures in the original languages.

But there is a more important level of awareness, sensitive to the variety of metaphors in which Scripture refers to God in feminine images. Jesus, for instance, in an image rarely used in worship, refers to himself as wishing to gather people together as a "mother hen gathers her brood under her wings" (Matt. 23:27, Luke 13:34). Only one who has kept chickens can know how protective a mother hen is and what a marvelous image she is of divine protectiveness. In the prologue to John's Gospel, translators shy away from an exact rendition of the last verse (1:18), which says literally, "God's only begotten, he who is in the Father's breast." The word *kolpos* (breast) rarely makes it into English, the RSV being an exception here. Apparently even the faint suggestion of female anatomy for God troubles us, though anthropomorphisms abound in Scripture.

We feel uncomfortable with such passages as Deuteronomy 32:18: "You forsook the creator who begot you and cared nothing for God who brought you to birth." Jesus compares his death and resurrection to labor pains and childbirth (John 16:21). Much of our theology of Christian initiation might be more balanced if the image of new birth had developed throughout history as did images of incorporation or forgiveness. New birth is equally as prominent for initiation in the New Testament. Baptismal regeneration became a most controversial term, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries. A positive approach to the birth images in baptism (John 3:5, Titus 3:5) gives an important dimension to God's gift of new life in the body of Christ.

Prenatal and Postnatal Events

Protestantism has yet to recover those aspects of Christology witnessed to by some of the minor christological feasts. It is probably no accident that,

despite widespread recovery of much of the Christian year, Protestants have not seen much value yet in the feasts of Naming, Presentation, Annunciation and Visitation. The biblical evidence, of course, is in the first two chapters of Luke, but there is far more there than just shepherds and angels. Prenatal and postnatal events are part of the history of salvation, though we ignore them. The Annunciation (March 25) has had powerful appeal to the greatest painters of past ages; we have looked in another direction, though this feast once signaled the start of the civil year. It still marks the beginning of the climactic event in the salvation of the whole human race. And it is entirely in the hands of a woman. Traditionally an angel is sexless, and the only other person in Luke 1:26-38 is a woman, Mary. There are parallels with her kinswoman, Elizabeth — John is not the only forerunner. Visitation (May 31) has intrigued musicians with the *Magnificat*. In the *Magnificat* the social creed of the Christian church is articulated in its most concise form — all in the context of a dialogue between two peasant women (Luke 1:39-56).

The postnatal stories are too good to miss, too. The Naming of Jesus (Luke 2:21) stresses Christ's identification with human society, particularly in receiving a common Hebrew name on the eighth day (January 1). The Presentation in the Temple (Luke 2:22-38) on the 40th day (February 2) is the first event in which humans proclaim the meaning of the Christ child. And that proclamation comes first from the lips of the elderly — a man and a woman, Simeon and Anna. What a difference it would have made if the church had based its theology of ordination on these two prototypal proclaimers of God's word! I cite these passages only to show rich images that we would probably not have overlooked if they had been masculine. Fresh sensitivity to the female role in the process of salvation will help us discover other elements in God's word which we have missed.

Limiting God, Limiting People

There seem to be two stages in applying our sensitivity about sexist language in worship: the negative stage of eliminating exclusive language and the positive one of developing language that affirms both sexes. Unfortunately, most who have worked in this field have been content with the first of these. *Actually we need language even more explicitly sexual than that we now use — language that affirms both sexes in our knowledge of God and of humanity.*

The negative stage, of course, is very important. It comes in the realization that the English language has definitely changed in the past decade and that such terms as "man," "mankind," "men" and the masculine pronouns are no longer being used in the familiar generic sense. This change has been recog-

nized by the National Council of Teachers of English, a group more likely to acknowledge current usages than to initiate new ones.

The negative stage has two implications for the language of worship. First of all, it becomes increasingly problematic to limit God to masculine images — and the words "he," "his" and "himself" are no longer so inclusive as they once were. Words that imply that God is masculine, as these pronouns now do, are much more restrictive and limiting in naming God than such terms were in the past. Today a hymn, a prayer or creed that uses these pronouns says something much more narrow than it did a decade ago. Since we hardly want to set limits to God, these words must be replaced by more inclusive language. This task challenges us to broaden our comprehension of the deity. The Section on Worship of the United Methodist Church has published a list of 200 ascriptions for God. Perusal of this fascinating document can lead to an expansion of our language for addressing God and our comprehension of the Giver of Love. The first step is the purgative one of eliminating language that is now exclusively male in our speech about the Redeemer of Israel.

Second, the same negative stage is necessary with language regarding people. In the past, it meant one thing to say "who for us men and for our salvation." Today, that phrase means something quite different. The new International Consultation on English Texts (ICET) translation, now used by many denominations, says "for us and for our salvation." There is no more need to limit people today than to limit God. The negative step means pruning away terms that are exclusive in present use: "man,"

Annunciation

✦ DOWN! downward plummets Gabriel
in his annual flight
on spangled wings, his voice of gold,
his visage silver-bright.
But Mary greets him with a yawn,
a cold, inquiring, "Well?"
until he fairly cowers to say
the joy he came to tell,
And stammers in his voice of gold,
the jeweled jaw shocked shut,
when Mary in her voice of brass
shrugs and snaps, "So what?"
Poor Gabriel! He blurs the news,
and flaps away, unsure,
for modern-day Magnificats
are not what once they were!

GLORIA MAXSON.

"men," "mankind." Salvation is for all, not for just one sex, as these words now imply.

Inclusive Terms

The positive stage, on the other hand, is both more creative and more difficult. It is the phase in which we develop inclusive terms for our understanding of God and for our speech about humanity. It implies an even more explicitly sexual language than we now use, but a language in which female and male terms are balanced. It means that when God created us in God's own image, we were created male and female. We do not seek a gray, sexless imagery, as if God created us neuter, but the rich coloration of both sexes. This effort is not easy; it is simpler to follow the familiar monochrome. But when we take this step, we soon find that our visions of both God and humanity are greatly expanded.

How do we reach this creative stage? We begin with Scripture and tradition. We find, once we start looking, traces scattered everywhere of the female side of God, the feminine half of humanity. Eleanor McLaughlin reminds us that Chrysostom could call God "Sister, Mother" and Anselm could pray to Jesus as Mother. It helps to know that Chrysostom and Anselm could do it. We need to recall the medieval debates on the Christian life as reflecting either Mary or Martha. Our first steps must be taken on familiar ground but with a keenness of sight we have never had before. We must discover the femi-

Dark Advent

† BEGUILLED by cold we enter winter's ark,
the sky behind us narrowing to wink.
In vain we hold a candle in this dark.

The solstice reaches in its falling arc
far as rank clouds can stretch or sun can sink.
Beguiled by cold we enter winter's ark.

We probe for life in evergreen's dry bark,
but limbs are strung with needles black as ink.
In vain we hold a candle in this dark.

We hope through laughter to engage a spark,
but ice has frozen humor's ductile link.
Beguiled by cold we enter winter's ark.

With groping faith a savior's birth we mark,
since Mary's term is ending now, we think.
In vain we hold a candle in this dark,

for virgin birth's induced by song of lark
and virgin milk is summer's warming drink.
Beguiled by cold and locked in winter's ark,
in vain we hold a candle in this dark.

KATHRYN CHRISTENSON.

nine images already available in Scripture and tradition before we can develop new ones.

A word of caution may be helpful. It now seems that more recent materials, especially hymns, are the worst linguistically. Not until the 20th century did hymnists get aroused about the brotherhood of man. Victorians were not concerned about "lesser breeds without the law." But the "good guys" of the social gospel could cry: "Join hands, then, brothers of the faith," meaning something twice as inclusive as those words now signify. Others could sing: "Till sons of men shall learn thy love," or "The voice of God is calling/ Its summons unto men," not realizing how exclusive those lines would sound today. Someone has suggested that we need to change only one letter in another hymn: "Wise up, O men of God!" All these and many more hymns now suggest the opposite of what they intend. Consequently, they may have to go unsung for a time.

What do we do with much of the older hymnody and language of prayer? I do not believe that it should all be discarded, though one can be more selective in choosing it. There are plenty of alternatives to singing "Good Christian Men, Rejoice." But even that can be mended once people learn to substitute "folk" for "men," "one" for "man," and "humans" for "mankind." In so doing, we are really reinforcing the writer's intentions by translating a previous language into a present one. And there are some surprisingly good words we never before appreciated, such as the 15th century "O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing." The translations of the International Consultation on English Texts will be helpful for creeds, canticles, doxologies and the Lord's Prayer. One can check the new *Episcopal Book of Common Prayer* (1976) or the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978) to see ways by which exclusive sexist language has been avoided, though less intentionality in providing language that affirms both sexes seems evident.

Acknowledging the Limits

There is bad news, too. We need to know the limits before we can do anything responsibly new in worship. There are some things we ought to do that we have not done; there are also things that we ought not to do. It is only by knowing the limits that we can get a more radical view of unexplored possibilities.

First of all, we are not free to rewrite Scripture. There is no doubt that the world view within which it was written was patriarchal. We must be careful to distinguish between those things that were culturally contingent and those things which are essential to the gospel. Paul says many things about women which reflect his culture. But he also makes what must be the most radically egalitarian statement in all of Scripture, in Galatians 3:27-28: "Baptized into union with him [Christ], you have all put on Christ

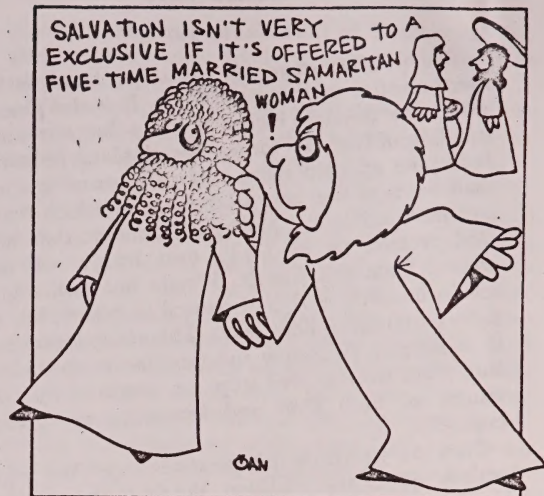
as a garment. There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female; for you are all one person in Christ Jesus." This equality is based on baptism. It does not hurt to know that women baptized persons in the early church, that fonts have been designed in the shape of a pregnant woman, that womb imagery is clear in the Easter vigil, or that Calvin and Wesley, on the other hand, were vehemently opposed to women baptizing. The more we look, the more we find.

But Scripture cannot be rewritten, though it frequently deserves retranslation. *Anthropos* can be translated "human being" instead of "man," but we cannot use *anér* as anything but "man." I do not think we can change the word "Father" when it appears in Scripture. But, as indicated above, we have numerous possibilities for addressing God in prayer. I now realize it was wrong of me for many years always to begin grace at the family table with the words "Heavenly Father," especially with my three daughters and wife present. I had countless other options and never exercised them. How narrow an image of God that one ascription now implies! My images of God have grown since I began reaching out for alternatives to that invariable "Heavenly Father."

We are not free to avoid the masculinity of Jesus Christ, who, as a concrete human individual, had to have sexuality. But the important thing is not that Jesus became man but that he became human, one of us with whom every woman and man can identify. Thus the clause in the creed of the United Church of Canada, "who has come in the true Man, Jesus," no longer means what it did in 1969. The important thing is that God became human, not that God became masculine. Still, I do not yet see any alternatives to referring to the second member of the Trinity as "he" or "him."

God-Talk and People-Talk

Okay, those are the limits; but what are some of the possibilities in actual worship language? Pronouns give us the most trouble. Many times our prayers would be greatly improved by rigorous excision of any third-person pronouns. Simply say "you" when speaking of God, and in almost all cases it will be a better prayer by being made vocative. Of course, this language will not work in parts of the service not addressed to God. Here we can change "God . . . he" to "God . . . God" or to some such naming as "God . . . our Sovereign." "God . . . his" can give way to "God . . . God's" or some such possessive as "God . . . our Sovereign's." The really difficult pronoun is the reflexive. I have turned "God . . . himself" into "God . . . Godself." I admit I do not like neologisms, but I find that, with use, "Godself" becomes less abrasive and reminds me that I am speaking of a God who is more than masculine. The easy way is to avoid the reflexive



altogether, but I am fond of speaking of God as giving Godself to us (as in the sacraments), and nothing other than a reflexive is strong enough to say that adequately.

With regard to humans, we have many possibilities. I do not find it strained to double pronouns; I do not mind saying "he or she" or "hers or his" or "him or her" every time a third-person pronoun is necessary. I do not like "he/she" or "s/he," as one does not speak slashes. Written language, in my opinion, should correspond with spoken, not vice versa.

There is also a wide variety of instances in which it is not awkward to say "women and men." In Chaucer's time the words "brethren" and "sistren" were both used, but the latter was lost (about 1550), to our impoverishment. More inclusive terms ought to be used if it is clear that such is intended ("poet" and "Jew" rather than "poetess" and "Jewess," which happen to be diminutives). Words that now clearly indicate sex ("man," "mankind") should be balanced with their parallels ("woman," "woman-kind"). If such exclusive terms cannot be balanced, then it is better to avoid them in preference for single inclusive terms such as "people" and "humanity."

It should be clear that we have just begun to explore new possibilities both in God-talk and people-talk. There are no ready-made answers. Some things will sound awkward for a while, just as, not so long ago, addressing God as "you" did. Familiarity soon makes novelties sound natural. "Godself" may not bother us for long, or we may find a better reflexive. But I am convinced that we cannot remain content with "God himself" much longer.

A search which begins because of the imperative of justice may have major side effects in helping us come to a more profound knowledge of God and the

people of God. Such a search can stretch our concepts and understanding of God in unexpected ways. And it can put us in deeper contact with our own humanity. We may find that, in trying to give others their due, we ourselves receive as much in return. The concern about sexist language is a major means for changing attitudes.

There are plenty of nonverbal changes needed in worship—some as elementary as moving beyond

preaching robes with padded shoulders (an irrelevant masculine image of ministry), using women and children as ushers, and electing female bishops. But words are certainly among our most important formative elements. The present birth pangs of the church are a sign of health. We must move to language that affirms both women and men. Together, both constitute the world that Christ came to save.



KEITH WATKINS

Faithful and Fair

For centuries the language of liturgy has at times reflected a distorted, dualistic concept of the nature of God. Even the Bible, often suffering from the overly masculine influence of its translators, has seemed to encourage this sexist mode of worship. How then do we remain faithful to God without alienating half the human race? Keith Watkins answers this question with candor and fresh insight, and demonstrates how we can apply the emerging patterns of nonsexist speech to liturgy. According to Dr. Watkins:

The language of worship . . . is changing. Even if we wanted to stop the process, there is no power strong enough to keep these changes from coming to pass, for this movement at the very center of the church's life is impelled by energies that are gaining strength—energies generated by renewed Bible study, reassessments of human experience, the reconstruction of theology, and the reordering of the church's structures.

Throughout this timely book, the author heralds these trends and offers numerous prayers that make use of inclusive language. He also includes revised psalms from Advent through Easter to show how sexist language can be altered or eliminated.

For those ministers and church workers who see the crucial need for changes such as these, *Faithful and Fair* is a most welcome guide to a newer, more enlightened way of perceiving and worshipping God.

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KEITH WATKINS

Faithful and Fair

Transcending
Sexist Language
in Worship

The Challenge to Conventional Language

1

And I heard the altar cry,
"Yes, Lord God, sovereign over all,
true and just are thy judgements!" (Rev. 16:7 NEB)

The language of worship, until now heavy with the metaphors of masculinity, is changing. Even if we wanted to stop the process, there is no power strong enough to keep these changes from coming to pass, for this movement at the very center of the church's life is impelled by energies that are gaining strength—energies generated by renewed Bible study, reassessments of human experience, the reconstruction of theology, and the reordering of the church's structures. We do not yet know how to pray as we ought. All that now is clear is that the time is coming when the language of worship will express the nature of God more truly and of humanity more justly than does the vocabulary of prayer commonly used today.

This new movement has taken many people by surprise. During the past thirty-five years we have experienced dramatic changes in the language of the sanctuary. Most American Christians have exchanged their King James or Douay Bibles for one of the modern speech translations or paraphrases. The archaic, reverential use of *thee* and *thou* has dropped out of most public prayers, and most of us can no longer wrap our tongues around the *eth* and *edst* with which some verbs used to end. The way we talk in worship is simpler than it used to be. All these changes are so much a part of current worship experiences that we are scarcely aware of them.

Just as we are settling down to the full enjoyment of this new, brisk, and contemporary language of prayer, the new challenge has crashed upon us, one that confuses and unsettles us more than have any of these other changes. This new challenge questions the language of Scripture, of hymns, and traditional prayers, of

instructions in worship books and the ways we talk in conversation. Critics of traditional liturgical language are showing how the conventional language of prayer is based on a falsely dualistic understanding of reality, how many of its portrayals of God are misshapen and idolatrous, and how it consistently states an anthropology that distorts the true nature of both women and men.¹

What is at stake now is more than felicity of language. It is truth and justice. The very nature of God and the character of religious experience are involved in this debate over the use of exclusively masculine forms of speech in our references to the One whom we worship. Underneath the questions of grammar and syntax are the ethical issues of equality, freedom, the powers of men, and the rights of women. While justice and truth are much broader categories than those addressed in this book, these words are properly claimed here. What we say and do in the house of prayer does make claims about God and shape the structures of human existence.

How is the church responding to this challenge? Sometimes with bewilderment, then anger, reaction, embarrassed laughter, and condescending references to women, and occasional efforts to compensate with alternate liturgies. Or with much talk in classrooms and sacristies, in editorial offices and liturgical conferences. This conversation has given birth to private prayers and small group services that experiment with new liturgical forms. Some of these new forms of prayer are being tried in public worship, occasionally even the main Sunday service. The new worship books are being influenced by this challenge.²

Despite these initial responses, Christian public worship continues to be dominated by the metaphors of masculinity. On most Sundays I worship in churches of the extempore tradition, in which pastors develop the structure of the service and select or compose most of its hymns, devotions, and prayers. Week after week these services exhibit ignorance or ineptness—ignorance of the challenge or ineptness in devising ways of moving forward creatively. On other Sundays I worship in churches of the prayer book traditions, in which the text of the service is prescribed by church authority and published in official books. Whatever pastors may

wish to do, they are bound by the disciplines of their churches to say what the books provide. On weekdays I worship in a seminary chapel, where the debate is more direct and intense. I know the pain of students and faculty, of men and women, of younger and older persons, as they joust with one another in the struggle to be true to their experiences and their understandings of reality.

While it is clear that liturgical language will be restructured, the detail of that reconstruction cannot yet be known. The dough is still rising and we do not know yet what the baked bread will be like. Even so, there is much that can now be done. Pastors, musicians, and other worship leaders can participate in the process, helping to prune old ways of their damaged parts, create new ways, and evaluate all in the effort to reform the language of worship.

The scene repeats itself so often that the actors and their lines are easily anticipated. The occasion is the meeting of the worship committee of a congregation. The actors include the minister, the choir director, and half a dozen other members of the congregation. The atmosphere is tense, feelings are high, and the committee's convener is having trouble keeping control. The previous Sunday the minister had rewritten the words of a well-known hymn and printed them in the bulletin, with the intention of getting around the masculine language that was so prominent in its text. The choir director was enraged: "It is not right to tamper with the words of a hymn, and besides you did it crudely. The meter was wrong and the rhyme was off." Before the minister could offer a defense, two women on the committee were sparring. Sitting boldly upright, her face flushed and her knuckles white, one woman declared that she didn't need to have any words changed. "I am proud to be a woman, and I know how the language works." Her antagonist applauded the minister's attempt at inclusive language, concluding her statement by saying, "It was the first Sunday in weeks that I could really worship."

Episodes like this reveal the complexity of the challenge to liturgical speech. Intertwined with theological and linguistic questions are other difficult topics, dealing with artistic standards, claims of law, interpersonal relations, local traditions, and the

control of congregational life. No wonder feelings run high. Every one of these factors—convictions about God and religious authority, beliefs about right and wrong, the most basic principles of life in organized communities, personal power—is infused with emotional energy over which we have little control. Even when our minds understand and counsel patience, we are likely to find that another power within us takes control. We lash out with words that surprise us with their intensity and sharpness.

Therefore it is all the more important that we work with wisdom so that changes in the language of worship will draw us closer to God, lead us toward maturity in self-understanding and control, strengthen the church's witness to the gospel. The proposals that follow attempt to outline a pathway that leads through the thicket of linguistic and liturgical change. They are designed for pastors, musicians, and other worship leaders, for people who have to make decisions every week about what to say in the sanctuary. Although theoretical considerations lurk in the shadows, the form of this exposition is practical, aimed at helping people plan for next Sunday's service. I am making two assumptions: we have to go through this thicket, in this matter there is no choice; and we can choose our pathway. Surely there is a way that leads through the briars with only an occasional scratch. If we fail to find that pathway, we will be dragged through the center of the tangle, with clothing and flesh slashed by the thorny branches.

As I write, I am especially conscious of the fact that I (and most worship leaders) am male, middle-aged, and white. People like me created the liturgical tradition of the church and conduct its rites and ceremonies. We continue to dominate the chancels and sanctuaries of Christendom, the liturgical commissions, editorial offices, publishing houses, seminary classrooms, and agencies for the preservation of orthodoxy. Our bias seems inescapable, a persistent tendency toward conserving the past rather than creating a new future. It is hard for us even to be reformers of worship. To be revolutionaries is almost unthinkable.³

Yet I must speak—because so much of what I know about God is womanly. In the body of a woman I received the gift of life and at her

breast I first experienced the numinous. From her stability throughout my childhood, I experienced the reality of the Rock upon whom the psalmists call, and by her way of transmitting freedom and responsibility, I discovered the meaning of my own authentic existence as a human being and as a man. Joined with another woman, I have gradually learned the fuller meaning of my manliness and have been granted the power of creating new life. The fruit of divine love, as it has been channeled through our bodies, includes three daughters each of whom has come to Christian womanhood. In fairness to these women, and to myself, it is important that I try to bring language and experience into closer correspondence with the truth of what we know of God and with the justice that befits our relations with one another.

Because justice and truth are such overwhelming words, it is necessary to approach them modestly. One component of justice is fairness, absolute fairness, rooted in God's own being, and therefore necessary for us. One aspect of truth is faithfulness, uncompromising faithfulness to our theological tradition and to our religious experience. Thus the first interim principle that can guide our striving for truth and justice in Christian worship is this: *during this transitional period our goal should be the development of liturgical language that is fair to women as well as to men and that is faithful to our experience of God.* As the discussion unfolds, I will suggest additional principles but this one stands out above the others. "Fairness" and "faithfulness" are the two words that help us find our directions.

*All praise to you, O God our Savior.
As Creative Word, you give life and keep it strong,
moment by moment sustaining us and calling us to faithfulness.
As living Commandment, you provide us with a pattern for life so
that we can know how you want us to live and expect us to obey.
As suffering Servant, you show us your power of life
and win the victory over sin.
As ever-present Spirit, you inspire us with the will to live according
to your purposes.
O God our Savior, may you be praised!*

Faithful and Fair

2

*Love and Loyalty now meet,
Righteousness and Peace now embrace;
Loyalty reaches up from earth
and Righteousness leans down from heaven. (Ps. 85:10-11 JB)*

One Sunday in August 1978 was a turning point in my understanding of the limitations of the traditional language of worship. Our oldest child was home for vacation after nearly two years of missionary service in Zaire. Before returning to her African labors, she preached in our church, the church where our family had worshiped for seventeen years, where she had made her confession of faith and been baptized, where she had often served as candlelighter and choir member, and where she had been commissioned for her work abroad.

In keeping with the occasion, our pastor chose a good missionary hymn, Mary A. Thompson's "O Zion, Haste, Thy Mission High Fulfilling." I sang energetically, joining in the call to "proclaim to every people, tongue, and nation / That God, in whom they live and move, is Love." Everything was fine until we reached the verse: "Give of thy sons to bear the message glorious." I knew what the hymn intended. After all, as professor I had explained that sort of thing before. The generic masculine use of sons should not confuse us. The hymn was challenging parents and congregations to inspire their own young people, both sons and daughters, to enter into missionary service, an intention I could fully support.

But Billie and I had "sent" not a son but a daughter—a woman with grace, charm, strength, and faith. With my head I knew that the hymn included her, but at the deeper level of my heart I wanted the hymn to proclaim that it was my daughter who had gone to publish glad tidings of peace, of Jesus, of redemption and release.

My discomfort that Sunday morning was relatively mild

compared to that which many people have experienced. Important as she is to me, my daughter is someone other than myself; the verbal slight did not touch the center of my own being. In seminary classes and in conversations, however, I hear the testimonies of people who encounter the exclusion directly and personally. Some of them have never heard the rules that govern the use of masculine words when persons in general are being referred to. Others know the rules in their heads but find that the vital center of self-identity overrules the rules. No matter what the conventions of language declare, women are left out. Left out when Christmas carols proclaim "peace on earth, good will to *men*." Left out when "good Christian *men*" are invited to "rejoice with heart and soul and voice." Left out when forced to call themselves *son* or *brother*: "Thou my great Father, I thy true son; / Thou in me dwelling and I with thee one"; "Time, like an ever-rolling stream, / Bears all its sons away"; "Lord, we thank thee for our *brothers*, / Keeping faith with us and thee."

Although all uses of masculine terms for persons in general or for groups made up of men and women may create confusion and pain, some practices are more troublesome than others. The more abstract the usage, the easier it is to bear; the more concrete, the harder to endure. When used to mean the human race, the word *man* is relatively clear . . . "good for man or beast." When used in plural forms, however, such words are confusing. "*Men* and children everywhere, / With sweet music fill the air." To whom does the word *men* refer? All human beings or adult males? Since children are specifically mentioned, *men* cannot mean all people (as distinguished from other living things). Probably the author means "adults and children," but the hymn is unclear. Not only does such language confuse meaning, but it contributes to the impression that the church belongs to men rather than to women and that God holds men in higher esteem than women.

Fair to All the People

These illustrations lead to the conclusion that generic language is not as clear as it is supposed to be. A growing body of literature

reporting on empirical studies confirms the conclusion that every verbal transaction using masculine forms has to be interpreted.¹ In every instance we have to decide whether masculine words mean male persons only or human beings both male and female. The indicators are subtle: context, inflection, cultural habit, age of the persons involved, knowledge of conventional usage. When all parties to the verbal transaction are educated adults, with a well-developed knowledge of English usage, this process of interpretation often leads to agreement. It will be known whether the words in question refer only to males or to all persons.

Much of the time, however, the participants are not educated adults. They may be small children, or people with little schooling. Their English may be any of the many vernacular variants of the language. For them, these subtle indicators of meaning may pass unnoticed, with the result that meanings are obscured.

The studies are showing, however, that meaning is obscured even when participants are educated adults. The problems can be divided in two levels of seriousness. The one level might be called technical. Either meaning (males or persons) makes completely good sense, and nothing in the context indicates which it is. How does one decide? One shrugs one's shoulders and continues, assuming that sooner or later the truth will surface. Unfortunately, one party to the verbal transaction may decide too soon that the word means one or the other. The mistaken decision can lead to confusion and embarrassment, whether the decision is that the words mean males or that they refer to all persons regardless of sex.

The second level of seriousness is substantive. Often we form conclusions because our previous experiences condition us to understand things in only one way. I am still surprised when I see buses driven by women (and the surprise is even greater when I see the cockpit of an airliner under the control of a woman captain). Thus I am easily confused when I hear generic language used about bus drivers and pilots. "When a bus *driver* is on duty, *he* should . . ." Note that the noun does not indicate gender and that the masculine singular pronoun follows the normal pattern of generic language. But what comes to mind? Is it persons of either sex wearing a motor

coach uniform? Or is it men? Despite my education and my knowledge of the language, including its use of masculine generic forms, I still think of males rather than of females and males.

The puzzle that teases my mind is this: how are language and self-respect linked together? Has English developed in this way because society has already been stratified according to sex? Or has society become stratified because the language itself is biased toward men and against women? It is clear that language patterns do shape some aspects of social structure. We draw certain conclusions because of the form of statements even though the intrinsic content of the statements may not intend what we concluded.

In our Christian literature this problem of confusion is illustrated by material dealing with ministers. Hymns and other writings often used masculine forms to refer to ministers, as in the verse "God of the prophets! / Bless the prophets' sons." Does this author, Denis Wortman, mean young people as is the clear intention in "O Zion, Haste"? Or does he mean young men? My guess is that he means to refer to males. Wortman wrote it for the centennial celebration of New Brunswick Seminary in October, 1884, and in his accompanying letter refers to "all loyal sons" of the seminary.² At that time seminarians were exclusively male, as were ministers in most churches, Catholic and Protestant.

Thus Wortman's usage is not intended to be generic. He intended to refer to males. Yet the form duplicates generic use, implying that prophets as a class will always be male. *Sonship* may be physical or spiritual. It includes the younger generation—sons, nephews, "Timothys," and all the others. Yet even this extension of the language to a partially generic use implies that all representatives of the class *minister* will be male. The hymn that started out as a description of seminary life has become a means of strengthening a particular understanding of the way that ministry is supposed to be.

Here I am not discussing whether or not the ministry should include both women and men (which I believe it should). The only point I want to make here is that the form of Wortman's hymn leads to a specific conclusion concerning this matter. It assumes a position by means of a literary form; but our beliefs about the ministry should

be made not on the basis of the accidents of poetry but as the result of careful biblical study and theological discussion. For Christians the discussion about language is more than a search for clarity and precision, important as these values are. Theological principles concerning human life and the forms of human community are even more important. Through the generations of time, our race has been struggling to achieve the fullness intended by God since the creation. For every forward movement, there seems to be a recoil so that progress is slow, jagged, often marked by regression. Even so, the goal is clear and the direction unmistakable.

The one biblical statement that expresses this vision with absolute clarity is Paul's evangelical declaration: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:27-28). It is doubtful that even Paul understood the full import of this declaration which came as the crescendo of a rhetorical pronouncement concerning the relationship of the law and the gospel. His chief interest was the debate between Christians of Jewish ethnicity and those of gentile blood, a debate which Paul resolved by declaring that all Christians are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to God's promise, true children of God. The principle which he declared is that our identity in Christ overcomes the old divisions that have split apart the human race—divisions of race and nationality, of social class and station in life, of sex. In Christ, Paul claims, all have been given a new equality.

In his further work Paul seemed able to develop consistently one of these categories, the one of race and nationality. Here his mind was clear and his policies forthright. The church would be a united community that lived beyond the divisions of language, culture, and race. Often he was consistent in his teachings about class and social condition. Certainly Paul was right when he condemned the Corinthians for bringing their class structure into the place of worship and letting it divide the congregation into rich and poor, slave and free. (See I Cor. 11.) His Letter to Philemon is clear in its intent, which is to establish a new form of equality between two men

who had been slave owner and slave but now are made equal in Christ Jesus.

With respect to women and men, Paul was less clear. Perhaps he had not intended to be so sweeping in his declaration; yet the logic is right, and so is his passion. This ancient division is also meant to be overcome in a new Christian equality and unity. In some of his pastoral directions, such as I Corinthians 11 and 14, Paul distinguishes between women and men in ways that undercut his evangelical vision. Yet personal comments at the close of his letters reveal the fact that his circle of very close colleagues and workers included women. See especially Romans 16.³

The history of the church is disheartening with respect to the gospel vision of human equality in Jesus Christ. The divisions which Christ has overcome continue to shatter the human community . . . race and nationality, social class and position, and sex divide us into the powerful and the powerless, the privileged and the deprived. Most pervasive of all has been the subjugation of women because this division has taken place in every race and human class. Even the recent history of Western Christianity shows this flopping back and forth between a new humanity in Christ and the old humanity divided into status and condition.

This vacillation is illustrated by the participation of women in the missionary movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁴ Missionary boards were developed by women and provided the opportunity for women to act independently and with full responsibility. Much of the classical era of Protestant missions is the direct outgrowth of this aggressive work by women both in the mission boards at home and in the fields of missionary service abroad. Despite this period of remarkable advance there have been very serious setbacks and these as recently as in the half century ending about 1965. In the church and in Western society as a whole this period was marked by two developments: the gradual collapse of formal barriers to the participation of women in the positions that society gave them permission to enter and the gradual reduction in the proportion of women serving in these positions. Although I have lived through a portion of this period of reversal, I was but dimly

aware of what was taking place. Only after reading historical accounts and interpretations, have I been able to comprehend the pattern of what I have actually experienced.

Although my illustrations have come from the language and history of the church, this issue extends far beyond the church. Writers in other fields are insisting that the ways we use the language must change so that clarity and equality are its characteristics.⁵ Verbal instructions are to say what they mean and give the two sexes the same status. Language is no longer to serve as an instrument whereby women are kept in subordinate positions and men in places of superiority. The need for fairness cuts both ways. Traditional patterns of speech cause trouble for men, too. Their vision is blocked, their understanding cramped, their capacity to act shackled. They develop false perceptions of their own importance and preeminence. As a result of social conditioning they too are locked into patterns of activity that may be demeaning to themselves and to others.

Some people are not aware of the injustice that current uses of language inflict. For these people the old ways have worked well and continue to do so, but their number is diminishing. Younger persons especially, impatient with the older usage, are rightly demanding that the language change. And I have seen in Sunday school classes and in churches where I've preached that a surprising number of older persons are also happy to see patterns altered. They may start out by saying that they have no trouble with masculine forms since they are secure in their womanly identities, yet some of these older women have moved to the edge of their chairs, with a fiery look in their eyes, when I have talked about this subject. The need for clear and equal language crosses the barriers between the generations.

Faithful to God

Whereas we have been aware of the *people-talk* challenge for quite some time, the *God-talk* challenge has only recently entered the church's consciousness. We thought we knew how to talk to God and about God . . . and the language of hymnody, prayers, and

systematic theology all expressed this confidence. My own confidence (might I say complacency) was broken open when several students interrupted one of my lectures on the language of prayer. I had been discussing the use of you and your instead of *thee* and *thou*. When I mentioned that some writers were also questioning the masculinity of liturgical language, the debate broke out. On the one side, some students argued that masculinity expresses the very nature of God. God is called He, Father, and King, they insisted, because these words give us a truer insight into God's reality than their feminine counterparts can do. Later one of these students told me that he knows this language to be figurative, that God does not have sex organs and is father to humanity in a way that is different from the way that men become fathers of their children. Even so, this student insisted, we have to use masculine language because only these forms of speech communicate faithful insights into the divine nature.

Other students in that class session claimed that all human speech about God is figurative, that we never experience God's fullness, and that no human idea, no human language is capable of expressing God's character. They insisted that even the name Father is a metaphor, a word that ought not to be taken literally when used in reference to God. It became clear that these members of the class not only wanted to affirm that old language is figurative, but also they wanted to develop additional metaphors, including some that are feminine. If we can call God Father, they asked, then why not Mother too?

The debate was not resolved that day in class, not for those students, nor for other church people in their houses of worship; nor has it been settled for any of us in our public speech about God. Instead, new questions have forced themselves into our discussions and debates, into our prayers and our theologies. Who is God? Can human speech ever describe divinity faithfully and truthfully? What is the authority of the Bible for our worship, how binding are biblical language and forms? What is the source of liturgical language? What criteria are to be used in evaluating the words spoken when we pray?

At this point in our struggle with liturgical language we are much

like Moses who, on the day he saw the burning bush, called out to the Lord, What will I tell the people when they ask me the name of the God who has sent me? His question was urgent for two reasons: he had to know the true identity of the mysterious Voice who was sending him on so dangerous a mission; and the people would test Moses' reliability by the way he named this God. Both issues are still important and lie back of the debate over the language of prayer. We too want to be assured that the voices we hear come from the one God, revealed by Jesus Christ. And the people to whom we are sent demand that our teachings be faithful to this same revelation.

It is significant that Moses demanded a name, and that God answered in a way that shortcircuited the request. Instead of giving a name, God said: "I AM WHO I AM. . . . Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you'" (Exod. 3:14).⁶ This "name" which is spelled YHWH is really no name at all. Instead, it is a play on words, a cryptic set of letters derived from the Hebrew verb which means "to be." The meaning of this name is debated, but the most prominent opinions stress the active, present, causative qualities. YHWH "is the One who causes to be what is (or what happens)," in whose sovereign will "historical events and natural happenings have their origin." The God who spoke to Moses is *being itself*, the principle and power of all that is; and for that reason, if we must have a name for God, it will be one that expresses this connection between being and the One whose very self being is.

Certainly the Hebrews knew to whom the word pointed. It identified the one true God who had created the earth, sent the flood, and saved Noah. This namelike set of letters referred to the God who had called Abraham from Ur of Chaldea, promised him descendants as many as the sand of the sea, and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. It pointed out the God who had sent Joseph to Egypt and had protected the people from the famine. And now this same God had come to Moses, promising that the people could escape from their slavery and return to their ancestral home. Although the Hebrews used other titles for God, this name given to Moses was the only real name of their God. In the Old Testament this name YHWH appears some 6,700 times, more than all the other titles of God combined.

The most common term from the general culture available to the Hebrews was the general word for god. Semites around them talked of *El*, but Hebrews ordinarily used this word for deity in combination with modifying words. *El Shaddai* was the most important alternative to YHWH, and originally may have meant God of the Mountains. It came to express the majesty and omnipotence of YHWH. *El-elyon* meant Exalted One or Most High. Another combination, *El Olam*, seems to mean *Everlasting One*. *Elohim*, though plural in form, was usually understood to be singular and stressed "the fact that God, the Creator, is the absolute Lord over his creation and the sovereign of history."⁷

The people knew this God to be powerful and arbitrary, given to wrath as well as to mercy—definitely a divine being to treat with respect. Even the divine name, YHWH, had to be treated with respect—respect so great that it could not be pronounced. When people came to the letters which spelled God's personal name, they always said something else: instead of pronouncing it (the letters might have sounded like *Yahweh*)—instead of saying I AM WHO I AM—they would say the word for lord. Their eyes would see YHWH and their mouths would say *Adonai*.

One conclusion which can be drawn from this discussion of the divine name is that it makes a very great difference what we call God. Names are direct links between us and the persons, including God, with whom we deal. Names display character and portray attitudes. They can be used in ways that bless and damn. Names give life and they also destroy. A second conclusion is that God is never tied to names, even to the name given to Moses at the burning bush. No matter what the name, God is greater than the names, always more complex than the names can account for. No matter how much our names may express God's nature, there is more to God than our names can begin to say.

Because of their strong sense of God's nearness and God's awesomeness, Hebrews developed other ways of referring to the God whose name they dared not pronounce. Just as family members and close friends create nicknames and terms of endearment for those whom they love, so did the devout men and women of Israel. One

which became increasingly important was *Father* (Ps. 68:5; 89:26; Isa. 63:16; 64:8), and it was this term of endearment and respect which Jesus used as his most frequent way of addressing God. He taught his disciples to use this family word in their prayers, too. Indeed, Father has for Christians become another name for God.

Yet even Father tells only part of what God really is like, a fact which we know from our normal experiences with people. One man is known in so many ways, and the names we use reveal multiple facets of his personality. His small children call him Father, but so does his wife . . . the same name but such different meanings. He is called by his personal name, but even that name means different things, depending upon who uses it and with what inflection. There are special names that depict certain periods of his life and reveal specific dimensions of his character. Even yet I remember the strange feeling that came over me as a small boy the first time I heard my mother speak of my father with the nickname of his earlier years, the name by which she had first known him but now rarely used, a name that spoke of a past that I did not share, of a life that I would never know.

Thus our own experience with names on the human level confirms the Hebrew respect for the name of God. Names are powerful signs of life and personality. They are to be used with full awareness of their potency. Yet no name tells all there is to be told; no name reveals all the qualities and characteristics of a person's life and character.

The many names and titles that develop in our relationships with God indicate that the divine personality is highly complex. Although the Jewish-Christian tradition has stressed that God is one (see Deut. 6:4 and Eph. 4:6), certain parts of the sacred writings speak as though God is known to us in several guises, each of which expresses some part of the divine personality. In his classic study of this tendency, Helmer Ringgren cites three reasons.⁸ One of these causes is rooted in ancient Semitic thought—a tendency toward concretization. The second is the influence of Egyptian religion to personify the attributes of God. The third tendency came from Greece, which was to use separate titles for the attributes and functions of deity.

The strongest expression of this tendency in the Old Testament is Proverbs 8 and 9 where Wisdom is personified and described in godlike language. Similar passages are to be found in contemporaneous writings that are not included in canonical scripture, especially Ben Sirach 24:1-31 and Wisdom of Solomon 7:22-8:1. Three aspects of Wisdom are especially important as she is described in Proverbs. Perhaps most important is the fact that Wisdom is distinguished from the One whose name is Yahweh. Wisdom was created by the Lord at the very beginning of God's work of creation. Because she was created, Wisdom clearly is subordinate to Yahweh; but at the same time Wisdom is superior to everything else. A second characteristic is that Wisdom assisted in the work that God did, "Then I was beside him, like a master workman" (Prov. 8:30). The third characteristic is that Wisdom is feminine gender. In an inflected language gender and sex are different categories. Many nouns that cannot be considered female are grammatically feminine. The interesting question, therefore, is whether the feminine gender in this instance is merely a grammatical accident, or is it instead a deliberate choice of words based on insight into God's character?

The puzzle is complicated by the fact that certain other Old Testament words also are ascribed to God as though they were personifications of God's attributes. Some are feminine and some are masculine. Ringgren calls special attention to Righteousness and Peace—Sedek and Salem. "Righteousness and peace will kiss each other" (Ps. 85:10b). Here the tendency toward personification is more restrained than with Wisdom. Indeed, it is not at all clear that sedek and salem were ever anything other than abstract moral qualities in the tradition of the Hebrews.

Another word that more clearly stands distinct is spirit—*ruah*. This Spirit moved over the waters at creation (Gen. 1:2), and is in some sense separable from the Lord because it can enter into persons (Judg. 11:29; Ps. 51:11; Ezek. 2:2), and is free to travel about. In the New Testament, Spirit continues to be described with the language of deity (Eph. 4:30).

Neither Jews nor Christians knew what to do with these

personifications of God. In the Old Testament they are suppressed enough that it is possible to overlook their presence. In the New Testament, however, this suppressed multiplicity of God's character becomes much more prominent. Much of what the Hebrews had meant by wisdom was transferred to the Greek word *logos* and then ascribed to Jesus. Spirit continued her ambiguous course through piety and theology. Ever since then systematic theology has been working at the task of explaining how the *logos*, incarnate in Jesus, and the Spirit are related to the one God.⁹

In the movement from Hebrew to Greek, from *hokhmah* to *logos*, two things happen. The idea of subordination is lost. Jesus as the Word is more closely the equivalent of God than Wisdom had been. And the feminine gender is lost; *logos* is a masculine word and Jesus was a male. Once established in early Christian life, these two tendencies were later continued and given fixed forms in worship and theology. The Christian God is perceived officially in three manifestations, all of which have been considered masculine. We pray to and discuss God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Yet this consensus does not seem to remain in place. We continue to define and redefine trinitarian thought; and other characteristics of God persistently rise up in piety, liturgy, and theology.

The principle which supports this discussion is that language is faithful to God when it correctly identifies the one true God who from the beginning has been creating and sustaining, judging and showing mercy, hiding in the secret processes of nature and going public in the lives of saints and the words of prophets.

At this point we can ask two questions: (1) does our conventional liturgical language accurately point to the God of Abraham, David, Isaiah, and Jesus? And to the God of Miriam, Ruth, Bathsheba, Mary, and Dorcas? (2) is it possible that new language will develop which will help us speak more faithfully of the one true God whose personal name is too sacred to pronounce?

For some time now I have been especially attentive to the way people, including myself, pray in public. I am appalled at the emptiness of much liturgical language, at its dullness, its vain repetitions. Although these problems sometimes appear in books of

services and prayers, they are even more prevalent in extempore prayers, both in church and in other Christian gatherings. There is an apparent mindlessness that suggests shallow religious life and skimpy preparation for the leading of public prayer. Therefore I want to answer the two questions in the above paragraph by saying that the time has come for us to reexamine longstanding habits. Some church customs which have served us well in the past need to be set aside. New forms of speech need to be developed. The language of prayer is flexible and responsive to our experiences of God. The time has come for a new burst of creativity—and of truth.

*Blessing and glory,
wisdom, thanksgiving, and honor,
power and might,
are yours, O God our Savior.*

*We join our voices with the multitude of the redeemed,
with the angels and the creatures of heaven
who stand around your throne praising you.*

*With them, we yearn for that time when
all creation will be brought to its perfection,
when we will be sheltered by your presence,
when people will no longer suffer hunger or thirst,
when the sun will no longer attack with scorching heat,
when you will wipe away all tears from our eyes.*

*Then will we join in the song of everlasting adoration, crying out:
"Salvation belongs to you, O God,
and to the Lamb who was slain for us."*

Making Room

4

*For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isa. 55:9)*

The next step seems so very easy. As our stock of liturgical language grows, we should make room for it by cutting back the traditional and commonplace words and ceremonies. As I work on this challenge, middle-aged father that I am, I find that cutting back is very much like sorting children's books accumulated through the years; both tasks are more difficult than I had expected. Memories come back, long familiar words take on life again, the wisdom of past generations again becomes persuasive.

This recognition about worship struck me with special force on a wintry day in our nation's capital. I was one of one hundred fifty pastors and professors of worship from many churches gathered for worship in a rearranged chapel at Catholic University of America. We had been together for four days discussing our mutual concerns for worship, offering our praises and prayers together, and enjoying one another's friendship. Soon we were to brave the first snow of the season and find our ways back to our separate places of work across North America. The liturgy of the day was the celebration of the Lord's Supper according to the pattern of the Roman Rite of 1969. There were elements that are not of my own tradition—classical eucharistic vestments, the use of incense, and ceremonies like kissing the altar. The music was contemporary and strong, skillfully led by cantors and organist, and sung heartily by this diverse congregation. Everything seemed to fit together, the liturgy, its style, the very catholic quality of the physical space where we were meeting, even the tone of the congregation. There was something immensely satisfying about this event despite the fact that it expressed the tradition of a church greatly different from my own.

The power of a long and coherent piety, framed in emotive ceremonial form, affected my senses and my mind. How could anyone ask that the service be changed when everything seemed so good?

Yet change it will. The metaphors of masculinity were too powerfully present, in the Gloria Patri after psalms and hymns, in the masculine naming of God in the major prayers, in the dominance of males in the leading of the service, all of which was intensified by the patriarchal authority of the tradition which pervaded the assembly.

Let there be no ambiguity or uncertainty: Christian prayer will continue to call God *Father*. As a name of God, this word is an essential aspect of our theological tradition. As a metaphorical vehicle, rooted in one of the most powerful aspects of human life, Father communicates certain insights into the divine character, insights conveyed by no other word. What needs to be changed is not the fact that Christian prayer uses fatherly language, but the way that it is used. In the future this masculine language will be used less frequently and more carefully.

Let there be no ambiguity or uncertainty: Christian prayer in the future will be more diverse than it now is, drawing upon a wide range of figurative language, including metaphors that are inescapably female. Prayer in the biblical, Christian tradition has always been bold in its use of metaphors; and we live in a time when that boldness is especially needed.

These two convictions converge in a third interim principle: *during this transitional period there should be a careful and selective reduction of masculine metaphors in services of worship*. Although this principle can be stated in a more positive way, by saying that masculine metaphors should be used with greater clarity and precision than in the past, I have chosen to stress the negative form of the principle because it puts the challenge to us more directly. At this point in the process of change, the rhythm is necessarily that of expansion and contraction. By using the metaphors of masculinity with less frequency we will create space for the enlarged metaphorical language that is developing out of our study and prayer.

For some time I have been preparing services in which I cut out

the unnecessary masculinities—the generic terms, certain masculine metaphors for God, the traditions that assume that leaders of worship ought to be male. My goal has been simple enough—to see whether theologically and liturgically strong services can be created according to this expansion/contraction alternation. My conclusion is that the approach works, at least in those settings where leaders may choose their own materials. It is possible to select psalms and hymns and to offer prayers that are devout, orthodox, and consistent with the divine majesty, yet freed from conventional and unnecessary masculinities of language. These services can still be alive, interesting, and true.¹

To create such liturgies, however, requires work, sensitivity, and skill. The words of hymns and psalms have to be examined carefully, Scripture studied with new questions and objectives, prayer books evaluated by different criteria, and sermons prepared according to new guidelines. This work sometimes will be solitary—minister or musician working at the task alone. In some settings, the task will be shared by larger groups of people who are committed to the establishing of reformed linguistic usage.

Using the Language of the Psalms

One of the major tests of this expansion/contraction approach is the way we use portions of the Psalms which, along with other biblical lyrics, have long been major expressions of Christian praise. Daily services in churches and monasteries are built around the recitation of the Psalter, and selections of psalmody have punctuated the reading of Scripture in the main Sunday service of most churches. In the Reformed branch of the Protestant tradition only the biblical Psalms could be used as the hymnody for worship. Not until the early 1700s did these forerunners of today's Baptists, Presbyterians, Disciples, and United Church of Christ members ease up on the exclusive use of psalms and accept other kinds of hymns as appropriate elements of divine worship.² Even though current use of psalmody is greatly attenuated, restricted mainly to responsive readings and as the source for calls to worship and similar liturgical sentences, the Psalter still continues to be important for Christian worship.

Because of this prominence, we have to respond to problems connected with the fact that many of these biblical lyrics are addressed to the people rather than to God. Even in ancient times some psalms performed functions similar to calls to worship in contemporary worship. Some were instructions for the people's benefit, while others were pastoral exhortations. Psalm 95, which opens the traditional Liturgy of the Hours, illustrates this kind of psalm.³ The speaker addresses the other worshipers: "O come, let us sing to the Lord," and then explains why (vs. 3-5) by describing God's sovereignty over other gods, over nature, and over history. Because God is being talked about, the narrator uses third-person pronouns, the result being that this psalm is filled with a string of *hes* and *hims*.

Other psalms give the same problem—third-person singular pronouns—but for a different reason. Exhibiting an early form of Hebrew prayer, these psalms put the description of God's wonderful acts in a descriptive mode, thus using third-person forms.⁴ Other psalms use another pattern in which all of God's actions are "repeated back to God" in the prayer. The descriptive form, using third-person pronouns, expressed a deep sense of deference to the Almighty. Just as we may lower our gaze and step back when meeting a person who commands our love and admiration, so the people who developed these psalms step back from their encounter with God and frame their speech in a deferential third person.

The attitude of submission is not the problem; rather the pronouns are what bother us. Psalm 131, which does not have the third-person pronouns, expresses the submissive mode we all know to be authentic: "O Lord, my heart is not lifted up. . . . But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a child quieted at its mother's breast." This prayer is suitable for all believers in God.

The conclusion seems inescapable: for the time being, we will ordinarily use psalms which speak directly to God, rather than those that praise God indirectly with third-person language. Much good material is available for our use but we do have to take time to select carefully.

For some time I have been using a table of psalms for Sunday worship as a guide to selecting opening sentences for the service.

Since the table has been prepared for the purpose of using the Psalter extensively, it uses many psalms which refer to God in the third person. I am finding, however, that by selecting verses carefully it often is possible to maintain the "second-person principle." On those occasions when the psalm does not provide this possibility I choose from a different psalm or canticle.

A few psalms are so deeply engrained in the soul of Christian worship that I am ready to use them even though they refer to God in the third person. It is hard to imagine Christian worship without Psalms 23, 24, 100, 121, and 150. One advantage to the expansion/contraction approach to the challenge of language is that we leave ourselves room to use a few third-person psalms without making worship seem heavily male.

Trinitarian Ascriptions of Praise

A second problem connected to the use of the Psalter is the ancient practice of surrounding these Jewish lyrics with a doxology of praise. Again, the problem is not with the basic idea but with the way that we do it. When David brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem (I Chron. 15 and 16), he "appointed that thanksgiving be sung to the Lord" (16:7). The musicians responded with excerpts from Psalms 105, 96, and 106, concluding with:

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting!

In later years Christians have followed this example; but the form of the doxology has been changed. It now specifies the true nature of this God who is being praised: "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost." Psalms, other canticles, and many hymns now are concluded with this brief, trinitarian doxology of praise.

At this point I am tempted to formulate a new liturgical rule: if a formula gets in the way of worshiping God, then drop the formula. For many Protestants this rule can be applied easily to the Gloria following psalms since our hymnal selections have not used the Gloria anyway. Only recently have we learned about the ancient practice of singing this psalm doxology and therefore we can quickly unlearn it. The

change may be more difficult for people long accustomed to the formulaic Gloria after psalms. The liturgical function of christening Old Testament lyrics can be accomplished by using psalm prayers, as is illustrated in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*, whose editors state that "the psalm prayer strikes a clearly Christian note, making the Gloria Patri unnecessary."⁵ The aesthetics of discontinuing the singing of the Gloria Patri is more difficult to resolve. The rhythm of the words, especially when accompanied by physical movements such as bowing or singing, is not easily replaced. Some worshipers may decide that this particular use of "Glory Be to the Father" is so important that they have to continue it despite their intention to cut back in their use of masculine language.

A similar problem arises because of the custom to pattern hymns after psalms, even though their Christian orientation is clear. Thus, the final stanza of some hymns has become a trinitarian ascription of praise. Because of the strict requirements of meter and rhyme, these doxologies have varied widely. Even so, most of them have explicitly ascribed praise to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In some cases this doxological stanza was part of the original poem, but some hymns were composed without this formulaic ending, which was added later, probably to justify the singing of "amen" at the close.⁶

Why sing that final stanza, especially if it was added later? There is no confusion about the nature of God that requires this constant repetition of the formulaic words. Nor is the praise of God threatened by leaving them out, since that function properly belongs to the text of the hymn and the intentions of the singers. The doxology at the close is usually not necessary for theological reasons.

Of course, liturgical orthodoxy has insisted on the importance of singing all verses without omission so that we would get the full intention of the writer. Even if the hymnal editors have given us all verses of the original, which often is not the case, this policy is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of congregational song. The words are joined with a tune to make a new vehicle for transmitting the souls of the singers to God. Continuity and fullness of text are not the primary considerations. Some final verses may be so important to

the meaning and movement of a hymn that they cannot be omitted. If they are strong and if the people know them well, they probably can be continued. After all, this interim principle calls only for reduction of masculinities, not for elimination of all of them.

In many Protestant churches the Gloria Patri and the doxology are the two liturgical songs known by the congregations. At certain times in worship, a chord on the piano or organ will bring the people to their feet to sing. These two acclamations have always needed rest for periods of time so that the tunes would not be abused by overuse. Now, a new reason can be added for developing additional ways of praising "God in three persons, blessed Trinity."

One way of doing so is to draw on the appropriate verses of some hymns, especially some already well known to the congregations. "Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty" (which is sung, with a nice sense of appropriateness, to the tune "Nicaea") has two verses which could be used, each beginning with the "holy" ascription and ending with the phrase "God in three Persons, blessed Trinity." (Note that the editors of the *Lutheran Book of Worship* have altered "tho' the eye of sinful man" in verse three to read "though the eye made blind by sin.") The final stanza of "Come, Thou Almighty King" also proclaims the praise of the trinitarian God. Following the lead of the *Lutheran Book of Worship*, one pronoun is changed from the deferential third person to the direct second person, which is consistent with the rest of the hymn:

To thee, great One in Three,
Eternal praises be,
Hence, evermore:
Thy sovereign majesty
May we in glory see,
And to eternity
Love and adore!

Another act of praise with clear emphasis upon creator and redeemer is an Isaac Watts text which can be sung very nicely to the tune "Old Hundredth."

From all that dwell below the skies,
Let the Creator's praise arise;
Let the Redeemer's name be sung,
Through every land by every tongue.

Eternal are thy mercies, Lord;
Eternal truth attends thy word:
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore,
Till suns shall rise and set no more.

Other hymn segments can also be used as the instrument of congregational praise. Usually one such doxology will be used over a period of weeks and perhaps months, the text printed in the bulletin until the congregation no longer is dependent on the printed text.

Hymns Old and New

In a general assembly of my own church body, the worship services featured hymns written during the past three decades, many of them published by the Hymn Society. While the intention was commendable, the results were unsatisfactory because the language was often trite and too frequently depended on language now considered sexist. On the spot, I created another Watkins interim rule: if the hymn text was recently composed, is unfamiliar to congregations, and problematic, discard it; nothing is to be gained by trying to repair a liturgical lemon.

The discarding of a hymn is more difficult when the text is well known, much loved, and often sung. Even after leaving out a problematic verse, some hymns are difficult because the major poetic form depends on masculine imagery. How does the interim principle of selective reduction work in these instances?

For the time being, some hymns may have to be set aside because the problems are so severe. Several times I have sat in the seminary chapel working through Gerhard Tersteegen's magnificent hymn of praise, wondering how it could be made more serviceable. Its structure resists change: "God *himself* is present; . . . *Him* alone, God we own,

Him, our God and Savior; Praise *his* name forever!" Here masculine pronouns are put forward aggressively and the grammatical structure is used to convey the intensity of this act of praise. Perhaps a new translation could be developed; but as it now stands in the books, this hymn may have to be momentarily retired. "He Leadeth Me" is another hymn that needs to be set aside because it needlessly aggravates the language problem, routinely substituting he for God. Some hymns are so troublesome in their people language that they too require discontinuation. Even Whittier's name can no longer justify "O brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother."

The loss of some commonly sung hymns may not be so great a disaster for, as Erik Routley points out, the greatest offenders of the inclusive language principles are hymns by British and American writers between 1850 and 1950. Rather than hymns "about the glory of God, the beauty of Christ, and the delights of heaven," themes of the classical hymns, these later hymns exhort us to social justice and love for one another. Although justice and love need to be retained in the vocabulary of worship, the language does have to be chosen carefully.⁷ So too in hymnody and worship.

A great many hymns, although largely satisfactory with respect to masculinity of language, do have one or two problematic words or phrases. To eliminate these hymns right now would decimate our liturgies and impoverish our religious experience. Therefore, despite blemishes, some of these hymns can continue to be used if we are careful in our management of the process. Most people can handle one such hymn in a service, especially if the tune and text are strong and well known. For example, although "O Worship the King" begins with verses cast in the he-mode, it later switches to the you-mode. Its imagery is strong and in most cases not dependent on sexual metaphors. The people-talk is suitable. My vote would be to continue using this hymn, trying to balance it in services with other hymns that do not use the he-mode of addressing God.

Some people try to deal with these slight blemishes by suggesting that words be changed, either printing the alternatives in the bulletin or announcing them orally. The advantage of this practice is that it

quickly fixes the troublesome word or phrase and shows that the sympathies of the leaders favor the broadening of liturgical language. The disadvantages are that these changes sometimes generate controversy that is more detrimental to the human spirit than the damage done by unreconstructed hymns. These changes may also barbarize the text of the hymn, a serious problem since worship is too often squalid even now. Because this kind of change is made locally, each congregation develops its own form of hymns, thus making it more difficult for Christian unity to be experienced.

My conclusion is that the main responsibility for altering texts is lodged with hymnal editors who, it can be hoped, possess the skill to make deft and suitable alterations. Because their revisions are widely disseminated, the work of these editors is less likely to splinter the liturgical consensus and the body of Christ. We can rejoice that hymnal committees are moving forward in this task of revising standard hymn texts. Already their labors have borne fruit in the hymnal portion of the *Lutheran Book of Worship*.

During this interim period, however, most ministers and musicians have to deal with unrevised hymnals. Once purchased, a set of these books will last twenty years or more. Even some recently edited books are still sexist through and through. The problem is illustrated by the situation in one congregation where I conducted an *ad interim* Sunday ministry for several months. Their hymnal was edited in the late seventies, newly purchased prior to my coming, and duly supplied with memorial bookplates. Its language for people and God is unreconstructed. What are ministers and musicians to do?

The first step is a comprehensive analysis of the complete book. Every hymn, reading, and prayer should be read through, felt-tip marker in hand, every difficult word or phrase highlighted in the desk copy. In this way the book will be learned and the extent of the challenge made evident. By marking the problematic elements, worship planners will be able in the future to recognize quickly the problems they need to consider.

The analysis can then proceed to a second step which is to make lists. One group of entries will include hymns and readings that are

fully acceptable with respect to language; and another group will be made up of items that seem unusable during this interim period. A third list will include items that can be used by selecting stanzas or items where blemishes are slight and the hymn or reading can be managed without change. A fourth list could indicate items which are severely blemished but which nevertheless might be usable under specialized circumstances.

I am assuming every hymnal will be serviceable part of the time. The need to supplement hymnals does have to be faced. Most worship leaders have gone beyond their hymnal once in a while for other reasons than language, especially for the purpose of using a hymn with seasonal references or theological emphases. Many song leaders have supplemented the standard hymnal with an occasional gospel song. The practice of supplementing is not new.

One way of adding to the hymnal is to purchase a supplementary collection of hymns. One example is *Creation Sings*, a booklet of fifty-five hymns chosen, says the compiler, "so that they may be sung by any individual or group without provoking conscious or unconscious sexual distinctions or ranking of any kind."⁸ Some hymns in this collection are new compositions which rise up to the new standards of inclusiveness. Others are adapted slightly. Some of the older texts, however, still use masculine pronouns for God and the title Father in doxological verses. Yet this collection and others like it may be the interim solution for some congregations with especially troublesome hymnals.

Another way of supplementing is to produce one's own congregational supplement, using in it the hymns chosen because they exemplify the principles to which ministers and musicians, as well as worship committees, are committed.

Whenever we reproduce, however, we face a new set of ethical and legal issues. Hymn texts and tunes are artistic creations protected by law. Engravings and type set in books are under the control of those who publish them. The fact that we can reproduce so easily and usually not get caught in no way frees us from the moral obligation of respecting the just claims controlled by copyright laws.

In the process of evaluating, adapting, and supplementing hymnals, broader questions of pastoral leadership are involved. These are topics which I will address in later chapters.

Speech Patterns in Sermons and Other Oral Usage

An especially difficult challenge is to reduce masculinity in our normal speech patterns, two of which need to be discussed here. One is primarily found in people-talk when we phrase statements in the singular: "A minister . . . he . . ." The other pattern uses pronouns to reduce the number of times that it is necessary to repeat nouns. Both patterns tend to fill our speech unnecessarily with masculine forms. Once we become aware of what we are saying, it is possible to begin making changes in the way we construct our sentences and express our ideas.

It takes more than awareness. Even new books are being published in which authors admit the problem and then excuse themselves from dealing with it. One author I have been reading, for example, justified the use of masculine singular formulations by saying that in the past theologians have usually been men. If this author's only reference to theologians were to them in the past tense, then this self-defense has some justification. Yet this writer uses the same pattern in passages that deal with theologians today. Here the failure to alter sentence structure is neither justified nor justifiable. Our language can no longer be spoken or written this way.

One of the simplest devices in people-talk is to put certain general nouns in the plural rather than in the singular, with the result that the pronoun is the plural *they* rather than the singular *he*, *she*, or *it*. Why say, "A preacher should avoid gratuitous masculine references in *his* sermon"? It is a little better to say: "A preacher should avoid gratuitous masculine references in *his or her* sermon." (Surely we can agree that the slash technique is to be condemned; either form [she/he, s/he] is unpronounceable and scrapes like nails on glass.) Why not say, "Preachers should avoid gratuitous masculine references in *their* sermons"? This theory is simple; but for some reason it is difficult to put into practice. At least my speech patterns

are resistant; even after three years of determined effort, I still find myself falling into the singular noun, he-or-she-pronoun routine. Once the sentence begins in the singular, the speaker is (I've done it again). What I should be saying is: When sentences begin in the singular, speakers are trapped and have to wriggle out with as much grace as possible.

More difficult to resolve is the pronoun problem when the referent is God who has ordinarily been referred to in liturgical language in masculine gender. Since we always think and speak of God in the singular, even when we use trinitarian formulas, we cannot adopt the simple expedient of recasting sentences in plural forms. We can discontinue all of these third-person pronouns, using the name God every time the pronoun appears. Even *himself* would be changed to *Godself*.⁹ I have used this device on a very limited basis when reading from the Psalter in worship. There are places, in fact, when the congregation's ability to understand the passage is strengthened when *he* is replaced by *God* or *the Lord*. While this practice reduces the masculinity of speech about God, it has two limiting characteristics. The frequent repetition of this one word is jarring to the ear. Its very crudeness becomes a problem. The second difficulty is more serious. By greatly increasing the frequency of usage, we give this term a weight that can be questioned.

A second technique is to rearrange sentences so that we use adjectives and epithets in some of the places where we have previously used pronouns. Many sentences use God as the significant noun, followed by another phrase or clause that is dependent on God in meaning and grammar. "In Genesis it says that God created human beings in his own image." Or, ". . . in the hope that they too will come to know God and to live the new life that he gives." In both of these examples, the pronouns could be changed into *God* or *God's*. The advantage is that absolute precision is retained, since there can be no doubt whose image it is and who does the giving. Both sentences could also be revised by other means. The adjectival approach would change the pronoun in the first sentence fragment to divine—" . . . that God created human beings in the divine image"; and in the second sentence to the phrase

God-given—" . . . to know God and to live that new God-given life." Often one of the uses of the divine name or the relative pronoun can be replaced by epithets which clearly refer to God. When the context makes it clear that God and the one described by the epithet are the same person, and when the texture of the sentence permits, phrases such as "the Holy One" (or Eternal, Infinite, All-wise) can be used.

This deliberate recasting of prose style is a demanding intellectual activity. In conversation and in extempore speaking such as sermons, the challenge is even greater because there is no chance to cross out a poor start. Our goal should be to speak about God in ways that are always clear, always graceful, always faithful to the divine nature as it has been revealed to us.

Much as I love my mother tongue, I do not believe that its syntax is divinely inspired. Some of its current patterns of usage make us say things we do not want to say, placing upon us the obligation to find different patterns that do accomplish our intentions. It takes time, but if the challenge is understood to be as much linguistic and intellectual as it is religious, we are more likely to rise to it with zest and good humor—and godly zeal.

Holy One of Israel:

*We stand awestruck by your blazing glory,
your magnificent and creative power,
your faithful and steadfast love,
your just and merciful guidance of the whole world.*

How can we help but honor you because of the excellency of your character?

*How can we help but love you for your own self,
warm, complex, challenging, and ever present in all life's experiences?*

*Holy One of Israel, the great I Am of everything that is,
we praise your holy Name.*

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*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
teach and admonish one another in all wisdom,
and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs
with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Col. 3:16)*

Of the many conversations that have helped shape my convictions concerning liturgical language one stands out with special clarity. In a forum on this topic, a young woman flung out the charge that traditional liturgical language is destructive to human personality and has to be changed immediately. She accused people who resist these changes of being insensitive or of expressing bad faith. When we later talked, I mentioned that it had taken me years to unlearn *thee* and *thou*, and that the change to inclusive language would also take a long time. Crisply stating that she had made the change in a matter of weeks, and that anyone else who wanted to could do the same, she spun around and left the room. Our conversation was over, but the debate continues.

The part of her accusations that stands out most vividly as I remember that incident is the claim that traditional liturgical language is destructive to human personality. Even as a professor of worship, with all of my efforts to affirm the importance of what we say in worship, I had not made so strong a statement about the potency of language used in church. To say that it destroys personality is to claim very much.

Yet it is true that the language of the sanctuary is part of a social system which has systematically given men a place in the world from which women have been barred. Because I was born after the battle over women suffrage, my earliest memories were of both my parents voting (I suspect for Franklin Roosevelt). It came as a shock when I learned along the way that women had enjoyed this degree of citizenship for little more than a decade before my birth. Even

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though other discriminatory practices have more recently crumbled, the vigorous debates over the Equal Rights Amendment reveal how deeply engrained in our society are the existing patterns of inequality.

Through all this period, the church has been a significant part of the system in which women are kept in perpetually subordinate conditions. Our patterns of life have mirrored those of the society at large. Certain tasks have been designated as belonging to women and others to men. Very little of what we have done has ever questioned the arrangements between the sexes in the larger society.

In fact, the church has helped intensify the problem. Certain texts from the Bible have routinely been exegeted to confirm that God intends men to be dominant and women submissive. The fact that ordinarily only men have been ministers and elders conveys the further conviction that males either are more capable than women or that they in some way express more completely the characteristics of the divine—as though maleness is an essential property of the metaphor that leads us to know God. The supremacy of masculine language makes the point even more completely. All of the above is given divine approval by the things we do and say in services of worship.

The unsatisfactory character of our conventional usage has been made painfully evident to me during several months when I have been following an abridged version of the new *Liturgy of the Hours*.¹ This book provides a pattern of hymns, scripture readings, devotional passages from great Christians, and prayers, all designed to help people in their efforts to praise God. This abridgment bears the subtitle, *Book of Prayer for Personal Use*. The introduction is clear that the liturgy of the hours "is the prayer of the entire people of God" and is "proposed to all the Christian faithful." This translation and abridgment has been prepared by a community of male monks, and the book continuously uses male words instead of inclusive words. All references in readings, instructions, and prayers are to men and brothers rather than to people and friends (or brothers and sisters).

After I had already decided that this fault in the book was so great as

to render it unusable in most groups, I came across an even more serious example of entrenched cultural bias. The reading assigned to Monday of Week 11 is Judges 4:1-24. Barak refuses to go into battle unless Deborah the judge goes with him. She agrees to go but tells Barak that as a result he will not gain the glory because Sisera, the leader of the enemy, would fall into the power of a woman. The meditative response provided for this reading is: "God chose the weak of this world to shame the strong, so that mankind can do no boasting before God, for in weakness power reaches perfection."

One of the most poignant expressions of the destruction wrought by traditional cultural patterns is a passage in a badly mildewed book published in 1895, given me by one of my daughters. It was written by the woman for whom her grade school in Indianapolis had been named, Frances E. Willard, and told about her learning to ride a bicycle at the age of 53. In a preliminary comment Willard said that in childhood she had lived a very active life in the country, often imitating her father's work of carpentry and farming. At the age of sixteen "the hampering long skirts were brought, with their accompanying corset and high heels; my hair was clubbed up with pins, and I remember writing in my journal, in the first heartbreak of a young human colt taken from its pleasant pasture, 'Altogether, I recognize that my occupation is gone.'" Willard confessed that she had always been obedient to these limitations, even though she always had "felt their unwisdom even more than their injustice."

The long skirts are gone, except by choice, and jeans rule supreme. Yet the battle of dress codes was fought recently, during the years when my children were in high school. I remember a vivid conversation with a group of parents in a suburban high school on the edge of metropolitan Indianapolis, as recently as 1971, in which they decided that since the mothers wore slacks to the high school basketball games, there was no longer any reason for the dress codes that forced their daughters to wear skirts to the same events. Discrimination continues even though in more subtle ways. It probably will continue that way well into the future since the inertia of humankind is a powerful force. Much disappointment and heartbreak is in store for all of those who commit themselves to the task,

as some are doing, of overcoming this inequality in our generation.

Yet my sympathies are on the side of the debate that presses toward equality that is obvious and real. What we do in worship is part of the movement. We can discontinue our destruction of human personality and we can participate in the creation of a new vision of life—God's life and our own—in which reality transcends the fragmentation that is so powerful in current experience. If language can destroy, it can also give life; and that is what I hope will happen as we reform the language of prayer.

By now it is obvious that the process described in this book is slow—a gradual change in prescription rather than a sudden shift in the medication. The interim principle that sums up this aspect of the work can be stated this way: *during this transitional period leaders of worship will work with the natural processes of change.* "Work with" is an ambiguous phrase which includes several phases: understanding the dynamics of human groups, evaluating the adequacy of existing patterns, experimenting with new possibilities, and sharing in the public process of assessing the new developments. This principle has a corollary, a negative form, which is that leaders of worship will try not to frustrate the processes of change. By the word frustrate I mean to include both the effort to keep change from happening and the effort to push change into a rate or pattern that is contrary to its natural rhythms.

How Language Changes

What is spoken inside church buildings is closely related to what is spoken everywhere else. That English does change is clear to anyone who has read a few lines of Chaucer or Shakespeare in high school English literature courses. A comparison of the King James Version of the Bible with any modern translation is almost as dramatic an indication of change. As I compare the slang during my high school days with that of my children during the corresponding years of their lives, I see further evidence of the fact that language changes. The language of prayer also changes, perhaps more slowly, but in ways that parallel the changes in the broader field of language use.

The above paragraph implies that there is one English language. Our ordinary experience teaches us something different, that there are several ways to speak English even in the United States, without adding the further diversity to be found in other parts of the world such as Scotland or Australia. English has variations or dialects, some regional and others identified with social or class groupings. Textbooks do speak of standard English, meaning the dialect spoken by educated and literate people, at least when they are being careful. This standard English has been defined by grammarians, recorded in textbooks, and taught in the schools. In many families, it has been spoken by parents who thus socialized their children to speak that way.

No matter how well people learn standard English, however, they have to struggle to keep it up. One reason for the struggle is the fact that English meaning is conveyed in three ways—by the form of the words (for example, adding an *s* to make the plural of nouns), by the use of function words (such as the helping words that indicate verb tense), and by word order (the arrangement of words in a sentence). Much of classical English grammar, which is used to support standard English, developed in conscious imitation of Latin grammar even though Latin depends primarily upon form to convey meaning, whereas English depends heavily upon word order and function words. Thus, there has always been a struggle to keep grammatical rules and spoken language in harmony. Through the generations the trend in English usage has been away from inflected words, with ever greater dependence upon auxiliary words and word order to convey the meaning of the language.

Often the way we speak standard English differs from the way we use it in more careful and cultivated situations. Yet the conversational form indicates the way the language is moving. For example, in its form *everyone* is singular and grammatical logic requires that the words structurally connected with it also be singular (*everyone wants to go to Glendale to do his shopping*). We still feel the singular form of everyone with the verbs, which means that the verb in the example is singular in its form: *everyone wants*; we don't say *everyone want*. The pronoun, however, tends to be plural in

form, whatever the grammatical structure of the sentence calls for. Thus many people ordinarily say: *everyone wants to do their shopping*. The plural idea implied in *everyone* wins out and dictates that the plural pronoun be used. Thus the trend with the third-person pronouns seems to be in the direction of what has already happened with second-person pronouns. In common speech and formal speech alike, we now have discontinued several forms of the second-person pronoun, no longer using *thou*, *ye*, and *thee*, instead using the one word *you* in all places.

Every generation has its Henry Fowler or Edwin Newman who renews the call to purity of speech. Yet the people continue to talk and write the way they want to, and the language shifts, subtly but surely. Even though I'm a teacher, preacher, and writer, I too have relaxed during the two decades of my professional life, letting current usage influence me so that I am sometimes willing to break the rules that previously I had sought to uphold. No more do I worry so much about sentences missing a vital part, so long as the phrase is carefully crafted; and the agreement of reference pronouns with nouns like *none* or *everyone* is something I handle more lightly than I used to.

What seems to be the case is that the people win out over the professors. Journalists and newscasters occupy a middle ground, trying to represent standard English but always in ways that keep them within understanding distance of their publics. Even members of the educational establishment, at least its younger constituents, have relaxed their speech at about the same rate as they have eased up their dress codes.

We feel our way toward new forms, through countless millions of speech transactions, upholding the past and breaking away from it, deliberately trying new ways and accidentally falling into them. In time the recorders and arrangers, namely dictionary publishers and grammarians, tell us in their books what we have been doing in our speaking and writings.

This natural process of evolution is being pushed along by the recognition of specific problems in our own time. Whatever the rules have said, the use of the generic masculine has been a limiting factor in experience and understanding; it has contributed to

structural bias in culture and in the development of individuals. No longer can we speak the way we have in the past; changes have to be made. Some of the deliberate changes will stick, because they are confirmed by the less conscious processes of linguistic evolution. It is easy enough to change certain titles. Instead of stewardess, flight attendant; instead of manning an enterprise, staffing it; instead of men in the field, representatives or agents. Although man is a convenient word, short, easy to say, easy to rhyme, parallel with words like God and beast, it can easily be replaced with other words or phrases, including humanity, humankind, and the human race.

This more careful selection of words is also a way of dealing with the tendency in speech to belittle women while treating men as fully competent adults. It has been commonplace to use adjectives that call attention to irrelevancies and thus diminish the maturity or competency of the women so described—adjectives that highlight the clothes they are wearing, the way they look, or the surprise that they have conducted themselves so competently. Even worse is the tendency to use belittling nouns: "I'll have my girl do . . .," when what is meant is secretary. Vocabulary has to be used so as to express the fact that women as well as men belong to the human race, ordinarily are competent adults, and are identified by character and achievement more than by appearance and sex appeal.

I am convinced that most of the changes will take place by bending rules rather than by outright creation of new forms of speech. Perhaps the best illustration is the handling of the problem of third-person singular pronouns to which I referred earlier in my discussion of sermons. The masculine pronoun has consistently been used both when the antecedent noun is known to be a male and when the antecedent noun refers to persons, gender unknown. Only when the antecedent is known to be female, has the pronoun been feminine: "When a nun . . . , she. . . ." Some writers have urged that we invent a new general pronoun that would be used in all such occasions, a pronoun that does not have specific gender references. There does not seem to be any mechanism whereby this kind of invention could take place. In contrast, guidelines now being published move in the direction of staying close to the classical rules

while adopting modified patterns. We can regularly say "he or she," or "she or he." Or the pronoun can be made plural—they—on the assumption that what we tend to say in common speech is a sign of the movement of the language toward a single form similar to the emergence of the single form "you" for second-person references.

An even easier way, once we retrain our normal speech patterns, is to cast such sentences in plural forms. In nearly all cases the same meaning is conveyed and the pronoun problem is avoided. In those few instances when the meaning of the sentence requires the use of the singular, the compound pronoun may be used: "he or she."

A more difficult way, especially in conversation or extempore speech, is to recast sentences so that this noun-pronoun construction is not used. In written work, however, where there is time to think and revise, this kind of reconstruction is possible. Gradually, we will come to a place where the unexamined speech forms have moved beyond the older sexist patterns. This movement is very slow, especially for those of us with decades of experience in careful speech. The channels are deeply cut in the processes of the brain. Even when we try to learn a new way of speaking, we are likely to find ourselves starting sentences that are going to be troublesome before they are finished.

How Minds Change

In order for us to adopt a revised way of using standard English, we have to consider how it is that people change in their attitudes and ideas. After all, our goal is for worshipers to use revised texts and procedures willingly and effectively. Furthermore, we hope that the people of the churches will adopt new principles in their efforts to compose prayers and lead worship.

It is clear that all of us are triggered into action by certain kinds of gestures, intonations, phrases, and ideas. Sometimes we have learned to act these ways because of unexamined and unrecognized processes in earlier experience. Hearing the words "let us pray," many Protestants bow their heads and close their eyes without even thinking about their responses, while many Catholics kneel and look

toward the altar. We've been taught by word and deed to do what we do. Some of the triggers have been created by specific events in our past experience, events highly charged with emotion. But whatever the origin of the triggers, most of us respond spontaneously in the ways that we have learned.

Some of these mechanisms of response open us to new possibilities and others close us to them. The one kind of response helps us grow even though we may not be ready; the other keeps us from growth even when we need to. A good rate of growth needs to avoid spurts that leave us disjointed. It also needs to avoid artificial and negative restraints that can arise when people close down their receptivity to the continuous transformation of the language of worship.

Since these trigger mechanisms can be so destructive to healthy growth, a good pastoral strategy will try to avoid setting them off. The best way is to introduce additional data without naming it or calling attention to what it is. Often people who are antagonistic to vegetarianism as an ideology are unwilling to sample meatless main dishes. Yet these same people have enjoyed casseroles consisting of vegetables, cereal grains, nuts, cheese, and spices. As their experiences are diversified, they may come to the place where they have more data than their previous explanatory structures can handle. Although they may still oppose the ideology of vegetarianism, they may become able to understand this alternative approach to nourishment and culinary pleasure. They may even be able to discuss the subject in a relaxed and useful way rather than to dismiss it as a foolish point of view.

My strategy with respect to liturgical language is similar. The structure and contents of this book recommend that we enlarge the range of usage and experience without setting off the triggering mechanisms. It tries to present material in ways that are new, nonsexist, and recognizable, but without labeling this material as nonsexist. This approach is one that I believe helps people develop a better vocabulary of prayer without forcing them to brand their former practice as sexist or their later practice as inclusive. As new material comes into use, the people will find that their language stretches for a while, in time stretching so much that they will be able to recognize that something has happened to them. At that point, the processes of

interpretation and naming what has happened can be useful. People will be able to use what they know to be inclusive language because they already have been able to try it out before having to worry about its name and emotive character. By avoiding a triggering reaction, they are able to try something for what it is in itself, rather than in its capacity to stimulate a certain kind of reaction.¹

One difficulty in rewording hymns in the bulletin is that this practice may become a triggering mechanism that distorts growth for many people, causing them to take sides in the debate rather than explore new language because of its usefulness in divine worship.

I have talked about the metaphors that help us know God with several kinds of church groups including Sunday school classes of older adults. It has been interesting to observe the reactions of older women when I tell them that one of the Hebrew words for mercy is rooted in the word for womb. They readily accept my statement that translation usually has lost this female dimension in God's nature. And on some occasions they have taken hold of the idea on their own, suggesting how our understanding of God could be enriched if this aspect of God were more fully expressed in our language of prayer. I suspect, however, that if I had started out the session by labeling current practice as sexist, some of these same people would have been unable to hear my discussion of the womb of God. Most of these people will probably continue to pray just as they have for the past sixty years and more, calling upon God as Father most of the time. Yet they now are open to the wider character of God and would be able to respond favorably to prayers in which God is spoken to as the One who loves her children just as mothers love the children which they have borne in their wombs.

Language does have to be changed. But the changes should be made in ways that lead to changes in people, too.

How People Change

People do change, awkwardly, in spurts, in their own ways. Sometimes their minds lead the way and the alteration of customs and institutions follows slowly. Frequently, however, the process is

reversed and the mental image is the last to change. For a winter I served as the Sunday pastor of a congregation whose Sunday attendance averaged thirty-five persons during that bitter Indiana season. The church was in a small town, off the main highways, and its membership was composed primarily of farmers and factory workers. For reasons that I do not know, and contrary to practice in many other congregations, their organization was inclusive to a high degree. Women and men were included in the eldership and in the office of deacon, which meant that every Sunday at least one woman either offered the eucharistic prayer or in other ways assisted in the administration of the Lord's Supper.⁴ The one prominent liturgical function that a woman did not perform, again for reasons I do not know, was as worship leader in the introductory portion of the service. In the spring of that year, they called a woman to be their pastor. The match was a good one, and the congregation has been growing in numbers and in their missional expression of the gospel. Then they realized that their constitution was written in traditional language, which if interpreted strictly would invalidate much of what they had done. This they revised to make it clear that women as well as men were to be elected to the offices of elder and deacon. Furthermore, they inserted inclusive language in the constitution's references to minister so that they could be protected in the future and be free to call either a man or a woman as they chose.

At the same time, people in this congregation have trouble understanding the debate about inclusive language in worship. They resist the ideological movement to design a new way of talking about God and to God. They have told me that they are mystified by my interest in this matter. Clearly, the language of worship will be the last to change, long after other dimensions of their religious reality have altered.

It is not uncommon for small children to form their initial experiences of God in the image of their pastor. Some very unlikely people, as I see them, have reported that little ones in their congregations have called them God. It is known that in the process of abstracting upon experience small children only gradually are able to grasp the structural distinctions between man and woman, uncle

and friend, father and mother. These distinctions are too subtle for the very young mind to grasp as it begins to grapple with the patterns of social reality. Thus, the fact that prayer is addressed to Father may be considerably less important than the sex of the person who as minister embodies the divine.

One day I mentioned to my friend now pastoring the Indiana congregation mentioned above that she was going to lead some youngster to confusion. Sooner or later, I told her, some children are going to think of God in womanly form because their minister is a woman. She outpunched me. For nearly a year, she said, one child in her congregation insisted on calling her Jesus, only recently yielding and calling her minister by her own name.

The point of this illustration is stated in a comment which my daughter, Marilyn, wrote into the margin of an earlier draft of this book. "Language naturally changes when it no longer expresses peoples' experiences. Therefore, it *will* change—slowly—to be inclusive when society is inclusive. It will resist change as long as society is in fact not inclusive. Churches which have not already admitted women to full participation need to start there." It seems easy enough for me to agree since in the congregation where I am a member, women serve equally in places of leadership, and in the seminary where I teach a third of the students are women. Yet, I know males dominate faculty and executive staff in my seminary, and in most others. And I hear the arguments against women in ministry, arguments based on divine law as transmitted by the Roman Catholic Church and by Protestant Fundamentalism.⁵ I've been in the debate with Bible-believing Christians and know how aggressively they can carry their side of the debate.

God is able to raise up a new generation, as the experiences of the ages demonstrate. What is happening now is that a new generation is arising that hears God calling in new accents. The church is changing, perhaps more swiftly than most people realize; and the new social reality is emerging. The inclusive ecclesial society is going to bring its liturgical confirmation. More and more, the pressure of experience will drive us to a restructuring of how we think and speak.

It is not clear how men and women will be equal, but still unique, in this new social order in the church; nor is it clear how we will resolve the experiments with the language about God and about one another. But the new way of speaking is on its way; and I hope to be here when most folks have learned its accents.

*All praise be to you, majestic God, Fountain of life
and Example for us all.*

*As a shepherd searches for sheep that are lost, so you follow us wherever
we go to bring us back to safety.*

*As a woman looks into every nook and cranny in order to find the coin
which she has lost,*

*so you look for us in every out-of-the-way place
where we hide from you.*

*As a father stands by and waits, longing for his absent son and
grieving for his self-righteous one,*

*so you wait for us while we try our own ways,
only to find that they don't work; so you suffer through our proud*

and cruel accusations and help us

discover true humility again.

Fountain of life and Example for us all, we offer you our praise.

But Are the People Ready?

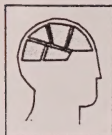
7

*Preach the word, be urgent in season
and out of season, convince, rebuke, and
exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. (II Tim. 4:2)*

A high school English teacher phrases the question this way: "Aren't you seminary people pushing an idea that no one else is interested in? Where I teach, people don't pay attention to sexist language. What interests us is access to jobs and equal pay for equal work." A seminary student asks: "Why should I bother with the problem of what to call God? In the church where I work, there's no call for changing liturgical language." The wife of a minister, half-jokingly, asks her husband at a gathering of friends: "Does anyone else in our church agitate for inclusive language? Or am I the only one?"

The unenviable position some pastors occupy was described to me by a United Methodist minister in a midwestern town. At the urging of a few church members, he began to work at the challenge of liturgical language in the way he worded his prayers, in his own speech patterns (especially in sermons), and in his selection of hymns and other worship materials. Everything was working well until several months later a guest preacher commented from the pulpit: "I notice by the prayers and the choice of hymns that your pastor is using inclusive language in your church. I want to express my commendation." That comment was what alerted most members to the fact of inclusiveness in the language in their church, something that most of them had not noticed previously. At first many of them were confused; but then some of them became quite angry.

One conclusion that can be drawn from these examples is that the people aren't ready, that they believe in the existing linguistic



GENERAL INFORMATION

Menopause (change of life) occurs in a woman when the ovaries no longer manufacture normal amounts of female hormones (estrogen and progesterone). The average age at onset of menopause is 40 to 50 years.

Signs and symptoms of menopause may include nervousness, change in menstrual patterns, "hot flashes" or "flashes," chilly sensations, excitability, fatigability, lassitude, depression, crying "spells," irritability, insomnia, palpitations, dizziness, headaches, numbness and tingling, joint pains, muscular aches, urinary frequency, gastrointestinal upsets, and changes in sexual desire.

There is probably no other subject dealing with women about which so much has been written and so many words spoken. There are still many different opinions as to what is "normal" and what is "abnormal." The majority of experts in the United States now look on menopause (even if it occurs at an average age) as a deficiency disorder which *should be treated*.

The purpose of treatment is not only to provide a better outlook on life for menopausal women, but also to *prevent* the effects of decreased female hormone production on the body. We all believe that the best treatment for any disorder is to prevent it before it occurs, if possible. We believe that at present we have a safe and effective method of *preventing* the following disorders, which so frequently follow the menopause:

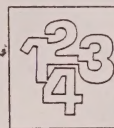
- Negative nitrogen balance. Many post-menopausal women have wasting of muscles and strength (look around you).
- Hypercholesterolemia (high fat content of the blood). Before menopause, normal women without thyroid disease or diabetes almost never have high blood cholesterol. After menopause, unless treated, it is very frequent.
- Coronary artery disease (heart attacks). Before menopause this is almost nonexistent in women. After menopause, without treatment it occurs with the same frequency as in men of the same age.
- Osteoporosis (thinning of the bones). This is the condition which allows "little old ladies" to fracture their hips so easily. Adequate treatment can usually prevent it.
- Joint abnormalities. These are much less likely to occur with treatment of menopause; very frequently they are encountered without treatment.
- Senility and cerebral arteriosclerosis. These are very likely to be prevented entirely or are much less likely to occur with adequate hormone treatment.

In the past many women feared that taking hormones after menopause might somehow make them more susceptible to cancers of the breast or female reproductive organs. Careful studies have been made, and the opinion of experts is still divided.

You and your doctor may decide on hormone replacement treatment. The amount of hormones necessary varies from person to person. Your response, laboratory studies, and your appearance at subsequent examinations are the best guides to treatment. An additional guide (suggested by some) is based upon study of the vaginal smear (the maturation index), which is taken during an internal examination by your doctor.

At times women in their 40s have some of the symptoms noted in the second paragraph, which may or may not

be related to declining ovarian activity. Favorable response to estrogen treatment helps establish this relationship. Failure to respond suggests emotional or environmental causes.



IMPORTANT POINTS IN TREATMENT

Activity. You should make every effort to be as active as your feeling of well-being and energy allow.

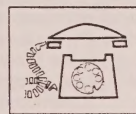
Diet. There are no diet restrictions.

Medications. Your medicines must be fitted to your own particular needs. Do not take any medicine (not even medicine you buy without prescription) without telling your doctor. If drugs are prescribed, carefully follow the instructions on the label.

Estrogens and progestins may be prescribed. Estrogen is now available in several forms, including the transdermal patch.

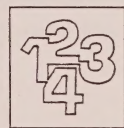
General Measures

- Creative, useful, and meaningful work for income or as a volunteer can help ease many unpleasant symptoms of menopause.
- Avoid cigarette smoking.
- Avoid excessive use of alcoholic beverages.
- Avoid completely: mood-altering, mind-altering, stimulant, or sedative drugs.
- Change your diet or activity level, if necessary, to reach your ideal weight.
- Confront and define any areas of conflict in your family life; occupational pursuits; and civic, spiritual, or leisure time involvements. If you cannot resolve conflicts alone, ask for help from family, friends, or competent counselors.
- Be moderate in all your activities.
- Try to be of good humor.
- Seek and keep a positive outlook on life.
- After 6 months, return to the office for another internal examination and cancer smear to determine whether your prescribed dosage should be continued or changed.



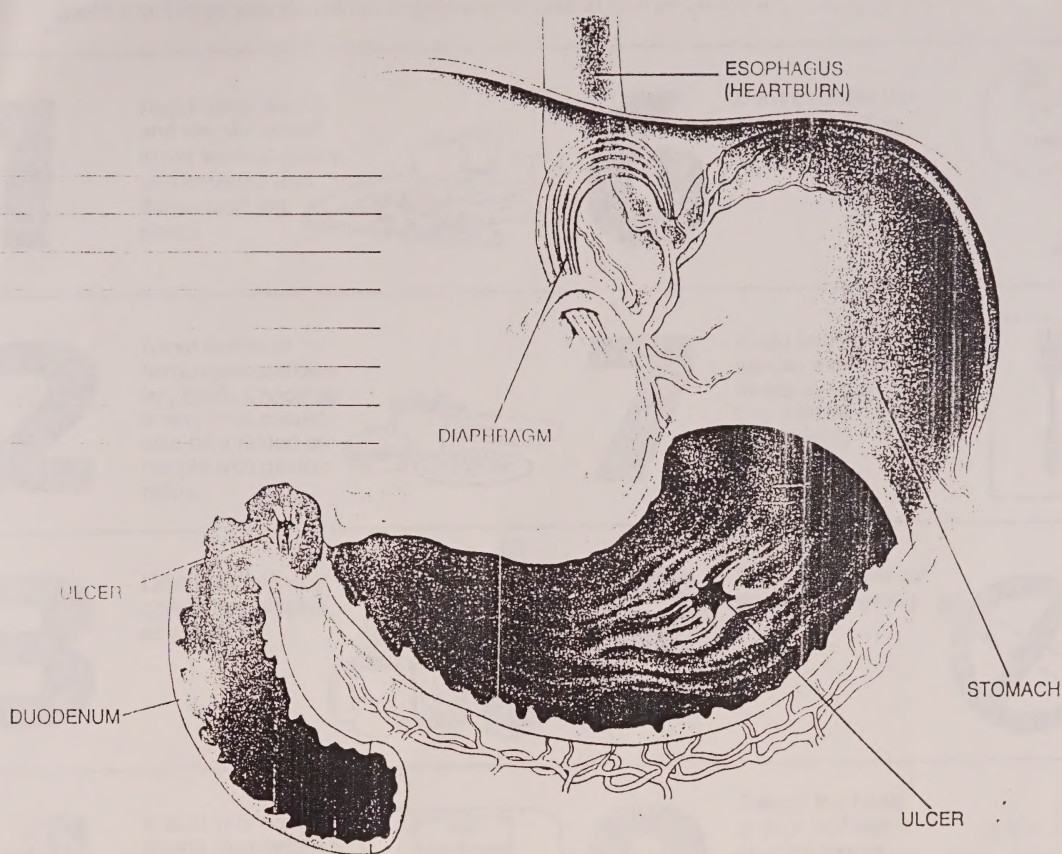
NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING HAPPENS:

- Irregular bleeding
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea



SPECIAL NOTE

The federal government has issued a paper regarding the use of estrogens for any purpose. Copies should be available to you from your physician or pharmacist.



DIGESTIVE PROBLEMS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM

It is normal for the stomach to contain acid. The problem occurs when acid concentrates in unprotected areas just above or below the stomach, or when the natural protection in the stomach is not strong enough. If you have indigestion, the first step is to try to determine the extent of the problem. For example, it's very important to find out whether or not you have an ulcer.

An ulcer is a serious condition that can cause pain when the stomach is empty and can result in bleeding. Without proper treatment from your doctor, the ulcer may not heal. However, even if you don't have an ulcer now, it is important to treat acid-related digestive problems since they pose a potentially significant threat to your health.

Agents that neutralize acid in the stomach can be very helpful for people with heartburn or ulcers. However, all antacids are NOT alike. Your doctor or pharmacist will help you find the antacid most suitable for you. You must take the antacid exactly as your doctor tells you to, and the full dose must be taken for the entire treatment period—even if the pain stops quickly.

Agents that stop acid production can also be very helpful in alleviating digestive problems. Called *H₂-blockers*, these drugs are available only by prescription from your physician. H₂-blockers are well tolerated, easy to take, and extremely effective. H₂-blockers relieve pain in most patients within the first few days of treatment. Keep in mind that H₂-blockers are not only for pain relief, so it is important to take every dose for as long as your doctor advises. As with antacids, a particular H₂-blocker may be more suitable for one patient than for another.

Duodenal ulcer is a chronic condition, and there is a good chance that it will come back. Your doctor may want you to take, on an ongoing basis, a reduced dosage of an H₂-blocker to prevent recurrence.

In addition to cooperating with your physician, there are certain things you can do on your own to ward off digestive problems. See the back of this page for suggestions on how you can help yourself alleviate digestive problems.

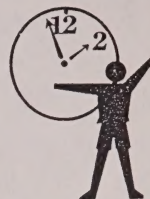
1

Avoid spicy, acidic, and tomato-based foods like fruit juices and Mexican and Italian food (eg, pizza).



6

Don't exercise too soon after eating.



2

Avoid fast-food hamburgers and other fatty foods. Chocolate in any form should also be avoided by people with gastric reflux.



7

Avoid bedtime snacks and eat meals at least 3 to 4 hours before lying down.



3

Limit your intake of coffee, tea, alcohol, and cola.



8

Stop (or at least cut down on) smoking.



4

Watch your weight. (Being overweight increases pressure in the abdominal area, which can aggravate reflux.)



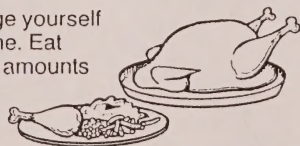
9

Elevate the head of your bed with wooden blocks. (Don't elevate your head by using extra pillows; this can increase abdominal pressure.)



5

Don't gorge yourself at mealtime. Eat moderate amounts of food.



10

See your physician if you are taking antacids three or more times a week.



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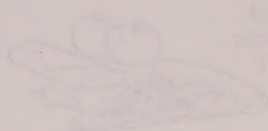
DIVISION OF GLAXO INC

Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Need
copies?

1

Avoid salty, white
and refined flour
foods (bread, pasta,
and frozen pizza)
(sodium)



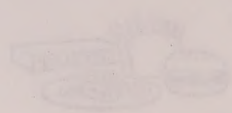
2

Don't exercise too
soon after eating



3

Avoid fast food
restaurants and
fast food chains
to stay away from
saturated fats and
sodium. Choose
foods with healthy
fats.



4

Don't drink
alcohol too often
and too much.
Limit to 1-2 drinks
per week for men
and 1 drink for
women.



5

Limit your intake of
saturated fats and
cholesterol.



6

Don't eat at least eat
5 servings of fruits
and vegetables



7

Watch your weight.
Being overweight
increases pressure
on the spine and
muscles, which can
aggravate sciatica.



8

Exercise the back
of your leg with
wooden blocks.
(Don't slouch
your head by using
extra pillows. This
can increase abdominal
pressure.)



9

Don't smoke. Avoid
alcohol and fat.
Increase exercise
to 150 minutes
per week.



10

See your physician
if you are back
in pain more than
once a week.



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Exercise 150 minutes
per week.

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COMMUNION SERVICE

In Metropolitan Community Churches everywhere, we practice an open communion. Everyone is welcome at this table, you need only come seeking the presence of Jesus the Christ.

At Covenant we practice communion in two ways. First, the ushers will come among you with the elements and you may receive at your seat; or if you wish, you may come forward and be served at the altar.

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

It is right to glorify you and to give you thanks, for you alone are God, living and true.

Countless throngs of angels stand before you to serve you night and day; and beholding the glory of your presence they offer you unceasing praise. Joining with them and giving voice to every creature under heaven, we acclaim you, and glorify your name, as we sing (say):

Holy, holy, holy God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of our God.

Hosanna in the highest.

God, you loved the world so much that in the fullness of time, you sent Jesus to be our Savior. To the poor Jesus proclaimed the good news of salvation; to prisoners freedom; to the sorrowful, joy. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, ate with the

scorned and forgotten, and gave this meal as a pledge of his abiding presence.

At supper he took bread, and after giving thanks, he broke the bread and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you." When the supper was over, he took the cup and gave thanks. He gave the cup to his disciples and said, "Drink from this all of you; this is the cup of the new covenant in my blood, poured out for you and many for the forgiveness of sins." When we eat this bread and drink this cup we experience anew the presence of the Jesus the Christ and look forward to his coming in final victory.

God, we pray that in your goodness and mercy your Holy Spirit may descend upon us and upon these gifts, sanctifying them and showing them to be holy gifts for your holy people, the bread of life and the cup of salvation, the body and blood of Jesus the Christ. Grant that all who share this bread and cup may become one body and one spirit, a living sacrifice in Christ to the praise of your name.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, all glory and honor are yours Almighty God, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

Let us recall the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

(The elements are distributed.)

Let us pray:

God, we give you thanks for these holy mysteries which bring to us here on earth a share of the transformed life to come, through Jesus Christ our Savior. May we go in peace to serve God and our neighbor in all that we do. Amen.

that finds God to be not the Judge but the One who intended and intends concord.

The blithe type lives with spiritual hazards that are as great as those brought by the grovelers. If you find yourself toward the healthy-minded part of the spectrum, you may use the Lord's Supper as a time to become especially alert to these dangers. The silences for self-examination are excellent opportunities for this. You might be riding for a fall. That is, you may be sunny about your faith because you have not yet been tested. No cloud has yet shadowed you. Wait until you find that your child is suffering from a debilitating disease. Let an economic disaster wipe out your assets. Some day someone important to you will find great fault with you and announce a breach. For all the smiles in the world, you cannot backslap your way into a new relation. Then some of the illusions with which you lived will drop.

Healthy-mindedness may imply a faulty spiritual diagnosis. You have heard the familiar statements of what Dietrich Bonhoeffer calls cheap grace: "I like to commit sins. God likes to forgive them. The world is admirably arranged." Or "I can sin; that's my business. God will forgive; that's the business God is in. We will keep each other busy." These are flippant translations of attitudes that color many easy lives. None of them measures the cost to God of the cross or the cost to humans of discipleship. Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it becomes nothing. But if it dies, it brings forth fruit. No one follows Jesus without taking up a cross and denying the self. Jesus knew what was in humans and searchingly stripped the disciples themselves of their claims upon God—because Jesus loved his disciples and did not want them to rule God out of their lives by their casualness.

In order to be sure that healthy-minded psychological types come to spiritual depth, the preacher in every sermon

will proclaim the law of God. In some contexts, the law of God is God's power that enables one to see what it is that care of the neighbor establishes. But in the present context, the law of God does nothing but accuse. You thought you were doing all right because you did not kill? Jesus says that if you hate, you are a murderer. You thought you were pretty healthy because you stayed married and faithful to one partner and never committed adultery? You all have committed adultery when you merely looked, or even thought, lustfully. Martin Luther liked to say that if you did not feel sinful you should reach inside your clothes and pinch yourself to see if you are still flesh and blood.

What are you supposed to feel? In some epochs and some congregations, preachers and counselors have to cool people off. Don't feel so much, they say; you are so busy enjoying your miseries that you do not even recognize that there is a Physician and that he has cured. But you, if you are healthy-minded, live in a different kind of age and place. Most sermons urge you to probe yourself more deeply. But you can build a wall against God if you start making the relation with God the basis of your own self-esteem; that will not work. The preacher's admonition to self-examination need not force you to change your personality type or your outlook on the New Creation. It only asks you to be serious. You are to see things not through illusion but as they are. The Christian faith calls you to realism about the disharmonious universe in which babies die, the innocent die, and you will die. There is a fundamental lack of fit in the way the world is now put together apart from Christ, and its misfit character will not go away this side of eternity, despite the victory of Christ.

What are you, then, supposed to feel? If not sniveling, weebegone, sub-Christian blues, you are to acquire awareness. You who are called "miserable sinners" may not feel miserable. But—to update an old illustration

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The blithe type lives with spiritual hazards that are as great as those brought by the grovelers. If you find yourself toward the healthy-minded part of the spectrum, you may use the Lord's Supper as a time to become especially alert to these dangers. The silences for self-examination are excellent opportunities for this. You might be riding for a fall. That is, you may be sunny about your faith because you have not yet been tested. No cloud has yet shadowed you. Wait until you find that your child is suffering from a debilitating disease. Let an economic disaster wipe out your assets. Some day someone important to you will find great fault with you and announce a breach. For all the smiles in the world, you cannot backslap your way into a new relation. Then some of the illusions with which you lived will drop.

Healthy-mindedness may imply a faulty spiritual diagnosis. You have heard the familiar statements of what Dietrich Bonhoeffer calls cheap grace: "I like to commit sins. God likes to forgive them. The world is admirably arranged." Or "I can sin; that's my business. God will forgive; that's the business God is in. We will keep each other busy." These are flippant translations of attitudes that color many easy lives. None of them measures the cost to God of the cross or the cost to humans of discipleship. Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it becomes nothing. But if it dies, it brings forth fruit. No one follows Jesus without taking up a cross and denying the self. Jesus knew what was in humans and searchingly stripped the disciples themselves of their claims upon God—because Jesus loved his disciples and did not want them to rule God out of their lives by their casualness.

In order to be sure that healthy-minded psychological types come to spiritual depth, the preacher in every sermon

will proclaim the law of God. In some contexts, the law of God is God's power that enables one to see what it is that care of the neighbor establishes. But in the present context, the law of God does nothing but accuse. You thought you were doing all right because you did not kill? Jesus says that if you hate, you are a murderer. You thought you were pretty healthy because you stayed married and faithful to one partner and never committed adultery? You all have committed adultery when you merely looked, or even thought, lustfully. Martin Luther liked to say that if you did not feel sinful you should reach inside your clothes and pinch yourself to see if you are still flesh and blood.

What are you supposed to feel? In some epochs and some congregations, preachers and counselors have to cool people off. Don't feel so much, they say; you are so busy enjoying your miseries that you do not even recognize that there is a Physician and that he has cured. But you, if you are healthy-minded, live in a different kind of age and place. Most sermons urge you to probe yourself more deeply. But you can build a wall against God if you start making the relation with God the basis of your own self-esteem; that will not work. The preacher's admonition to self-examination need not force you to change your personality type or your outlook on the New Creation. It only asks you to be serious. You are to see things not through illusion but as they are. The Christian faith calls you to realism about the disharmonious universe in which babies die, the innocent die, and you will die. There is a fundamental lack of fit in the way the world is now put together apart from Christ, and its misfit character will not go away this side of eternity, despite the victory of Christ.

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ministers—or anyone—can consume the leftover wine and bread. Forget about the elements then. If their power as Christ's body depended upon consecration, you would have to be deconsecrate them or save them for ongoing power. The choice you make shows how you regard this event.

Within our generation it is not likely that all Christians will come to agree on this or on any other version of the presence. Remember my first words in this connection: These efforts could do no more than draw away some veils while leaving others to surround the mystery.

Commitment

You may find it valuable to reflect on still one other feature of the Lord's Supper. What does this event have to do with my way of life?

By concentrating on what passes through your mind during the liturgy, we have sounded rather churchly and even churchy. These reflections might have the smell of incense and the glow of candles about them, and thus they lose contact with the surrounding world. Yet you may spend all but a couple of your 168 weekly hours outside the sanctuary. Debates about catechisms and dogma will almost never come up there. The test of this Lord's Supper and its workings will be in the lives of communicants.

In the oldest words we have about this meal, in First Corinthians, Paul concerned himself with connecting Communion practices with the lives of the participants. Many of them lived in open scandal. That had to stop. Others made a noisy orgy out of the eucharist itself. Paul drew the congregation up short with questions: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16-17). That word *participation* is an urgent link between the

liturgy and Jesus Christ and then between Jesus Christ and all the rest of life. An exchange is going on here; in fact, behind the Greek word translated "participation" stands the word *exchange*. In a sense, Jesus Christ, the son of God and divine Savior, exchanges roles when he takes on flesh, humbles himself, gives himself in this bread and wine, and suffers death. And for that reason you undergo an exchange and get to share in the divine gifts and life.

No one should walk away from the Lord's Supper unchanged. It is good to use the visibility of Communion and its bodily actions as an occasional means to reflect on personal commitment. You may have heard some experts advise that congregations be kept busy singing hymns during Communion so that they will not accidentally glance up and see who else is at the Lord's Table. A good-looking person of one sex may distract an observer of the other. The sight of someone you cannot stand could disturb you. (In which case, why were you not reconciled before this hour? Seeing the person is a reminder of ongoing work for you!) We could turn this around: Seeing and being seen is a very useful exercise, since bodily movement to the Table is an announcement of intentions. Not "Look at me, folks, how pious I am for being here!" The day when attending church gave you status is long past. Instead "Look at me, folks, as I look at you. We are sinners, but we are participants in the body and blood of Jesus Christ. We get to see what prophets and kings wanted to see but could not. We are part of the New Creation. Our bodies are on the line. We are committed."

A congregation is a gathering of people who bear one another's burdens. They are people who can support one another in illness and weakness, encourage one another when a task is heavy, speak a word of serious concern when they detect a lapse, and rejoice together in victories. Bodily presence at the Lord's Supper is not to be shunned

but celebrated. Jesus Christ is here in a bodily presence with the bread. Why should you lower your eyes? Jesus Christ is here also as a bodily presence in you and your fellow members, who are to be Christs to each other. You should not lower your eyes. Look up.

And as you look up, you see that the last communicants are leaving the Table. One or another of these reflections took control of your mind. You have to scoop up a hymnal, a worship folder, and some leftover thoughts, since the service will come rather abruptly to its end.

5. "In the Morning . . ."

The Communion being ended, and your reflections too, the ministers clear the table and replace the cup and plate while you join in singing the CANTICLE, a short hymn of thanks. The minister offers a PRAYER, pronounces a BLESSING on you and all the people, and says, "Go in peace. Serve the Lord." (This used to be: "*Ita missa est*"—"the mass is ended; go in peace." Hence the term *mass*.) So you go in peace. You glance at your watch, wondering whether the service was over-long, given the rather large communing congregation today. A secular thought crowds in. Has the roast burned? I've got to catch Harry and Marge to see about our get-together on Friday. Will that weak battery start the motor? Such thoughts were not completely out of mind during the service. They are with you yet. But God is present among people whose minds wander, whose attentions stray, whose staying-power is short. He is present in a sanctuary that never quite leaves behind its world. God is also present in a world that should become a sanctuary. His peace goes with you into that world.

You greet the ministers at the door, as you did back when they passed the peace of Christ, you chat with some friends, the car does start, the roast is only slightly burned, and most of the day is still ahead of you. By evening you will have passed through some of the usual cycles of boredom, drift, anger, and frustration. You hollered at the children. You grumbled about having to go to work tomorrow. You bet wrong on that choice of an evening

God be with you.
 And also with you.
 Lift up your hearts.
 We lift them up to God.
 Let us give thanks to the Almighty God.
 It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Blessed are you, O God,
 who with your Word and Holy Spirit
 created all things and called them good.

And so, with your people on earth
 and all the company of heaven,
 we praise your name
 and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
 God of power and might,
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.
 Hosanna in the highest.
 Blessed is the One
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Holy are you,
 and blessed is your eternal Word,
 who became flesh
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 whom your Spirit anointed
 to preach good news to the poor,
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 and recovering of sight to the blind,
 to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
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 when you would save your people;
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On the night before meeting with death,
 Jesus took bread,
 gave thanks to you,
 broke the bread,
 gave it to the disciples, and said:
 "Take, eat;
 this is my body which is given for you.
 Do this in remembrance of me."

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"Drink from this, all of you;
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And so, in remembrance
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Christ has died,
 Christ is risen,
 Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us,
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 Make them be for us
 the body and blood of Christ,
 that in unity we may be for the world
 the body of Christ,
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 until Christ comes in final victory
 and we feast at your table for ever.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 all honor and glory is yours,
 Almighty God, now and for ever.

Amen.

*The minister breaks the bread in silence,
 or while saying:*
 Because there is one loaf,
 we, who are many, are one body,
 for we all partake of the one loaf.
 The bread which we break
 is a sharing in the body of Christ.

*The minister lifts the cup in silence,
 or while saying:*
 The cup over which we give thanks
 is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

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 Do this, as often as you drink it,
 in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance
 of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
 we offer ourselves
 in praise and thanksgiving
 as a holy and living sacrifice,
 in union with Christ's offering for us,
 as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died,
 Christ is risen,
 Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us,
 gathered here,
 and on these gifts of bread and wine.
 Make them be for us
 the body and blood of Christ,
 that in unity we may be for the world
 the body of Christ,
 redeemed by Christ's blood,
 until Christ comes in final victory
 and we feast at your table for ever.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 all honor and glory is yours,
 Almighty God, now and for ever.

Amen.

*The minister breaks the bread in silence,
 or while saying:*
 Because there is one loaf,
 we, who are many, are one body,
 for we all partake of the one loaf.
 The bread which we break
 is a sharing in the body of Christ.

*The minister lifts the cup in silence,
 or while saying:*
 The cup over which we give thanks
 is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

God be with you.
And also with you.
 Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to God.
 Let us give thanks to the Almighty God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Blessed are you, O God,
 who with your Word and Holy Spirit
 created all things and called them good.

And so, with your people on earth
 and all the company of heaven,
 we praise your name
 and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
 God of power and might,
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.
 Hosanna in the highest.
 Blessed is the One
 who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you,
 and blessed is your eternal Word,
 who became flesh
 and came to dwell among us
 in Jesus Christ:
 whom your Spirit anointed
 to preach good news to the poor,
 to proclaim release to the captives
 and recovering of sight to the blind,
 to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
 and to announce that the time had come
 when you would save your people;
 who healed the sick, fed the hungry,
 and ate with sinners.

On the night before meeting with death,
 Jesus took bread,
 gave thanks to you,
 broke the bread,
 gave it to the disciples, and said:
 "Take, eat;
 this is my body which is given for you.
 Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over
 Jesus took the cup,
 gave thanks to you,
 gave it to the disciples, and said:

"Drink from this, all of you;
 this is my blood of the new covenant,
 poured out for you and for many
 for the forgiveness of sins.
 Do this, as often as you drink it,
 in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance
 of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
 we offer ourselves
 in praise and thanksgiving
 as a holy and living sacrifice,
 in union with Christ's offering for us,
 as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died,
 Christ is risen,
 Christ will come again.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us,
 gathered here,
 and on these gifts of bread and wine.
 Make them be for us
 the body and blood of Christ,
 that in unity we may be for the world
 the body of Christ,
 redeemed by Christ's blood,
 until Christ comes in final victory
 and we feast at your table for ever.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 all honor and glory is yours,
 Almighty God, now and for ever.

Amen.

*The minister breaks the bread in silence,
 or while saying:*
 Because there is one loaf,
 we, who are many, are one body,
 for we all partake of the one loaf.
 The bread which we break
 is a sharing in the body of Christ.

*The minister lifts the cup in silence,
 or while saying:*
 The cup over which we give thanks
 is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

An Alternate Lectionary with Psalter^s

ADVENT: YEAR A (1977, 1980, 1983)

1st Sunday	Ps. 122	562 ^a	Isa. 2:1-5	Rom. 13:8-14	Matt. 24:36-44
2nd Sunday	Ps. 72:1-19	597	Isa. 11:1-10	Rom. 15:4-13	Matt. 3:1-12
3rd Sunday	Ps. 146	612	Isa. 35:1-10	James 5:7-10	Matt. 11:2-11
4th Sunday	Ps. 24	561	Isa. 7:10-15	Rom. 1:1-7	Matt. 1:18-25

CHRISTMAS SEASON: YEAR A (1977/78, 1980/81, 1983/84)

Christmas	Ps. 96	585	Isa. 9:2-7	Titus 2:11-15	Luke 2:1-14
1st Sunday	Ps. 111	590	Eccl. 3:1-9, 14-17	Col. 3:12-21	Matt. 2:13-15, 19-23
2nd Sunday	Ps. 147:12-20	580	Isa. 61:10-62:3 ^a	Eph. 1:3-6, 15-18	John 1:1-18

EPIPHANY SEASON: YEAR A (1978, 1981, 1984)

Epiphany	Ps. 72:1-19	577	Isa. 60:1-6	Eph. 3:1-12	Matt. 2:1-12
1st Sunday	Ps. 29:1-4, 9-10	583	Isa. 42:1-7	Acts 10:34-38	Matt. 3:13-17
2nd Sunday	Ps. 40:1-11	568	Isa. 49:1-7	I Cor. 1:1-9	John 1:29-34
3rd Sunday	Ps. 27:1,4, 13-14	563	Isa. 9:1-4	I Cor. 1:10-17	Matt. 4:12-23
4th Sunday	Ps. 1	554	Zeph. 2:3, 3:11-13	I Cor. 1:26-31	Matt. 5:1-12
5th Sunday	Ps. 112:4-9	599	Isa. 58:5-12	I Cor. 2:1-5	Matt. 5:13-16
6th Sunday	Ps. 119:1-16	564	Deut. 30:15-20 ^a	I Cor. 2:6-13	Matt. 5:17-37
7th Sunday	Ps. 103:1-13	587	Lev. 19:1-2, 15-18	I Cor. 3:10-11, 16-23	Matt. 5:38-48
8th Sunday	Ps. 62	573	Isa. 49:8-18	I Cor. 4:1-5	Matt. 6:24-34
Last Sunday	Ps. 2:6-11	584	Exod. 24:12, 15-18	I Cor. 12:31-13:13	Matt. 17:1-9

LENT: YEAR A (1978, 1981, 1984)

Ash	Ps. 51:1-17	571	Joel 2:12-19	II Cor. 5:20b-6:16	Matt. 6:1-6, 16-21
Wednesday					
1st Sunday	Ps. 130	581	Gen. 2:7-9, 15-17; 3:1-7a	Rom. 5:12-19	Matt. 4:1-11
2nd Sunday	Ps. 33:12-22	569	Gen. 12:1-8	Rom. 4:1-5, 13-17	John 4:5-26
3rd Sunday	Ps. 95:1-2, 6-11	558	Exod. 17:3-7	Rom. 8:1-5	John 4:27-42
4th Sunday	Ps. 23	598	I Sam. 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a	Eph. 5:8-14	John 9:1-41
5th Sunday	Ps. 116:1-9	615	Ezek. 37:1-3, 11-14	Rom. 8:6-11	John 11:1-45
Palm Sunday	Ps. 22:1-11	559	Isa. 50:4-9a	Phil. 2:5-11	Matt. 26:14-27:66

LENT: YEAR A (cont'd.)

Monday	Ps. 36:5-10	572	Isa. 42:1-9	Heb. 9:11-15	John 12:1-11
Tuesday	Ps. 71:1-12, 15,17	567	Isa. 49:1-9a	I Cor. 1:18-31	John 12:37-50
Wednesday	Ps. 70:1-2, 4-5	578	Isa. 50:4-9	Rom. 5:6-11	Matt. 26:14-25
Thursday	Ps. 116:12-19	591	Exod. 12:1-14	I Cor. 11:23-26	John 13:1-15
Good Friday	Ps. 22:1-18	559	Isa. 52:13-53:12	Heb. 4:14-16; 5:7-9	John 18:1-19:42

SEASON OF EASTER: YEAR A (1978, 1981, 1984)

Easter Eve	Gen. 1:1-2:2	Ps. 33:1-11	Gen. 22:1-18	Ps. 33:12-22	
	Exod. 14:15-15:1	Exod. 15:1-6, 17-18	Isa. 54:5-14		
	Ps. 30:2-6, 11-13	Isa. 55:1-11	Isa. 12:2-6	Ezek. 36:16-28	
	Ps. 42:1-7; 43:3-4	Zeph. 3:14-17, 19-20	Ps. 98	Rom. 6:3-11	
Easter Day	Ps. 118:1-2, 14-24	592	Acts 10:34-43	Col. 3:1-11	John 20:1-9
2nd Sunday	Ps. 105:1-7	605	Acts 2:42-47	I Pet. 1:3-9	John 20:19-31
3rd Sunday	Ps. 16	600	Acts 2:22-32	I Pet. 1:17-23	Luke 24:13-35
4th Sunday	Ps. 23	560	Acts 2:14a, 36-41	I Pet. 2:19-25	John 10:1-10
5th Sunday	Ps. 33:1-11	565	Acts 6:1-7	I Pet. 2:1-10	John 14:1-14
6th Sunday	Ps. 66:1-7, 16-20	576	Acts 8:4-8, 14-17	I Pet. 3:8-18	John 14:15-21
Ascension	Ps. 110	561	Acts 1:1-11	Eph. 1:16-23	Matt. 28:16-20
7th Sunday	Ps. 47	561	Acts 1:12-14	I Pet. 4:12-19	John 17:1-11
Pentecost	Ps. 104:1-4, 24-33	583	Acts 2:1-21	I Cor. 12:4-13	John 20:19-23

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST: YEAR A (1978, 1981, 1984)

1st Sunday	Ps. 150	555	Exod. 34:4-6, 8-9	II Cor. 13:5-13	Matt. 28:16-20
2nd Sunday	Ps. 31:1-5, 19-24	606	Deut. 11:18-21, 26-28	Rom. 3:21-28	Matt. 7:21-29
3rd Sunday	Ps. 50:1-15	570	Hos. 6:1-6	Rom. 4:18-25	Matt. 9:9-13
4th Sunday	Ps. 100	611	Exod. 19:2-6a	Rom. 5:6-11	Matt. 9:35-10:8
5th Sunday	Ps. 69:1-18, 34-36	574	Jer. 20:7-13	Rom. 5:12-15	Matt. 10:26-33
6th Sunday	Ps. 89:1-4, 15-18	557	II Kings 4:8-16	Rom. 6:1-11	Matt. 10:34-42
7th Sunday	Ps. 145	602	Zech. 9:9-13	Rom. 7:21-8:6	Matt. 11:25-30
8th Sunday	Ps. 65	575	Isa. 55:10-13	Rom. 8:18-25	Matt. 13:1-23
9th Sunday	Ps. 86:11-17	556	II Sam. 7:18-22 ¹⁰	Rom. 8:26-27	Matt. 13:24-43
10th Sunday	Ps. 119:129-36	594	I Kings 3:5-12	Rom. 8:28-30	Matt. 13:44-52
11th Sunday	Ps. 78:14-20, 23-29	572	Neh. 9:16-20	Rom. 8:35-39	Matt. 14:13-21

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST: YEAR A (cont'd.)

12th Sunday	Ps. 85:8-13	566	I Kings 19:9-18	Rom. 9:1-5	Matt. 14:22-33
13th Sunday	Ps. 67	567	Isa. 56:1, 6-8	Rom. 11:13-16, 29-32	Matt. 15:21-28
14th Sunday	Ps. 138	578	Isa. 22:15-16, 19-23	Rom. 11:33-36	Matt. 16:13-20
15th Sunday	Ps. 26	586	Jer. 15:15-21	Rom. 12:1-8	Matt. 16:21-28
16th Sunday	Ps. 119:33-40	604	Ezek. 33:7-11	Rom. 12:9-18	Matt. 18:15-20
17th Sunday	Ps. 103:1-13	588	Gen. 4:13-16 ¹¹	Rom. 14:5-9	Matt. 18:21-35
18th Sunday	Ps. 27:1-9	601	Isa. 55:6-11	Phil. 1:21-27	Matt. 20:1-16
19th Sunday	Ps. 25:1-10	603	Ezek. 18:25-32	Phil. 2:1-11	Matt. 21:28-32
20th Sunday	Ps. 80:7-15, 18-19	607	Isa. 5:1-7	Phil. 4:4-9	Matt. 21:33-43
21st Sunday	Ps. 23	579	Isa. 25:6-10a	Phil. 4:12-20	Matt. 22:1-14
22nd Sunday	Ps. 96	595	Isa. 45:1-7	I Thess. 1:1-5	Matt. 22:15-22
23rd Sunday	Ps. 18:1-3, 46, 50	596	Exod. 22:21-27	I Thess. 1:2-10	Matt. 22:34-46
24th Sunday	Ps. 131	593	Mal. 1:14b-2:2b, 8-10	I Thess. 2:7-13	Matt. 23:1-12
25th Sunday	Ps. 63:1-7	589	Song of Sol. 3:1-5 ¹²	I Thess. 3:7-13	Matt. 24:1-14
26th Sunday	Ps. 128	613	Prov. 31:10-12, 20, 26-31	I Thess. 4:13-18	Matt. 25:1-13
27th Sunday	Ps. 105:1-7	564	Jer. 26:1-6	I Thess. 5:1-10	Matt. 25:14-15, 19-30
Last Sunday	Ps. 95:1-7	582	Ezek. 34:11-17	I Cor. 15:20-28	Matt. 25:31-46
All Saints'	Ps. 24:1-6	566	Isa. 26:1-4, 8-9, 12-13, 19-21	Rev. 7:9-17	Matt. 5:1-12

ADVENT: YEAR B (1978,1981,1984)

1st Sunday	Ps. 80:1-7	562	Isa. 63:16-64:8	I Cor. 1:3-9	Mark 13:32-37
2nd Sunday	Ps. 85	597	Isa. 40:1-11	II Pet. 3:8-14	Mark 1:1-8
3rd Sunday	Luke 1:46b-55	612	Isa. 61:1-4, 8-11	I Thess. 5:16-24	John 1:6-8, 19-28
4th Sunday	Ps. 89:1-4, 14-18	561	II Sam. 7:1-5, 7-16	Rom. 16:25-27	Luke 1:26-38

CHRISTMAS SEASON: YEAR B (1978/79,1981/82,1984/85)

Christmas	Ps. 98	585	Isa. 62:6-12	Titus 3:4-7	Luke 2:15-20
1st Sunday	Ps. 111	590	Jer. 31:10-13 ¹³	Heb. 2:10-18	Luke 2:22-40
2nd Sunday	Ps. 147:12-20	580	Isa. 61:10-62:3 ¹⁴	Rev. 21:22-22:2	John 1:1-18

EPIPHANY SEASON: YEAR B (1979,1982,1985)

Epiphany	Ps. 72:1-19	577	Isa. 60:1-6	Eph. 3:1-12	Matt. 2:1-12
1st Sunday	Ps. 29:1-4, 9-10	583	Isa. 42:1-7	Acts 10:34-38	Mark 1:4-11

EPIPHANY SEASON: YEAR B (cont'd.)

2nd Sunday	Ps. 67	568	I Sam. 3:1-10	I Cor. 6:12-20	John 1:35-42
3rd Sunday	Ps. 62:5-12	563	Jon. 3:1-5, 10	I Cor. 7:29-31	Mark 1:14-20
4th Sunday	Ps. 1	554	Deut. 18:15-22	I Cor. 7:32-35	Mark 1:21-28
5th Sunday	Ps. 147:1-12	599	Job 7:1-7	I Cor. 9:16-23	Mark 1:29-39
6th Sunday	Ps. 32	564	Lev. 13:1-2, 44-46	I Cor. 10:31-11:1	Mark 1:40-45
7th Sunday	Ps. 41	587	Isa. 43:15-25	II Cor. 1:18-22	Mark 2:1-12
8th Sunday	Ps. 103:1-13	573	Hos. 2:14-23	II Cor. 3:1b-6	Mark 2:18-22
Last Sunday	Ps. 50:1-6	584	II Kings 2:1-12a	II Cor. 4:3-6	Mark 9:2-9

LENT: YEAR B (1979,1982,1985)

Ash	Ps. 51:1-17	571	Joel 2:12-19	James 1:12-18	Mark 2:15-20
Wednesday					
1st Sunday	Ps. 25:3-9	581	Gen. 9:8-15	I Pet. 3:18-22	Mark 1:12-15
2nd Sunday	Ps. 115:1, 9-18	569	Gen. 28:10-17	Rom. 8:31-34	Mark 10:32-45
3rd Sunday	Ps. 19:7-14	558	Exod. 20:1-17	I Cor. 1:22-25	John 2:13-22
4th Sunday	Ps. 137:1-6	598	II Chron. 36:14-21	Eph. 2:1-10	John 3:14-21
5th Sunday	Ps. 51:10-16	615	Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 5:7-10	John 12:20-33
Palm Sunday	Ps. 22:7-8, 16-19, 22-23	559	Zech. 9:9-12	Phil. 2:5-11	John 14:1-15:47
Monday	Ps. 36:5-10	572	Isa. 42:1-9	Heb. 9:11-15	John 12:1-11
Tuesday	Ps. 71:1-12, 15, 17	567	Isa. 49:1-9a	I Cor. 1:18-31	John 12:37-50
Wednesday	Ps. 70:1-2, 4-5	578	Isa. 50:4-9	Rom. 5:6-11	Matt. 26:14-25
Thursday	Ps. 116:12-19	591	Deut. 16:1-8	I Cor. 10:16-21	Mark 14:12-26
Good Friday	Ps. 31:1-5, 9-16	559	Lam. 1:7-12	Heb. 10:14-18	Luke 23:33-46

SEASON OF EASTER: YEAR B (1979,1982,1985)

Easter Eve	Same as Year A except for the final lection				Mark 16:1-8
Easter Day	Ps. 118:1-2, 14-24	592	Isa. 25:6-9	I Pet. 1:3-9	Mark 16:1-8
2nd Sunday	Ps. 148	605	Acts 4:32-37	I John 5:1-6	John 20:19-31
3rd Sunday	Ps. 139:1-12	600	Acts 3:13-15, 17-19	I John 2:1-6	Luke 24:35-49
4th Sunday	Ps. 23	560	Acts 4:5-12	I John 3:1-8	John 10:11-18
5th Sunday	Ps. 22:25-31	565	Acts 9:26-31	I John 3:18-24	John 15:1-8
6th Sunday	Ps. 98	576	Acts 11:5a, 11-18	I John 4:1-11	John 15:9-17
Ascension	Ps. 110	561	Acts 1:1-11	Eph. 1:16-23	Mark 16:15-20
7th Sunday	Ps. 47	561	Acts 1:15-26	I John 4:11-16	John 17:11-19
Pentecost	Ps. 104:1-4, 24-33	583	Joel 2:28-32	Acts 2:1-21	John 16:5-15

Figure	Base	Height	Area	Notes
1	10 cm	4 cm	20 cm ²	Rectangle
2	8 cm	3 cm	12 cm ²	Rectangle
3	6 cm	5 cm	15 cm ²	Rectangle
4	9 cm	2 cm	18 cm ²	Rectangle
5	7 cm	6 cm	21 cm ²	Rectangle
6	5 cm	8 cm	20 cm ²	Rectangle
7	12 cm	3 cm	18 cm ²	Rectangle
8	4 cm	7 cm	14 cm ²	Rectangle
9	11 cm	2 cm	22 cm ²	Rectangle
10	3 cm	9 cm	18 cm ²	Rectangle
11	13 cm	4 cm	26 cm ²	Rectangle
12	2 cm	10 cm	20 cm ²	Rectangle
13	14 cm	3 cm	21 cm ²	Rectangle
14	1 cm	11 cm	11 cm ²	Rectangle
15	15 cm	2 cm	30 cm ²	Rectangle
16	2 cm	12 cm	24 cm ²	Rectangle
17	16 cm	3 cm	24 cm ²	Rectangle
18	3 cm	13 cm	39 cm ²	Rectangle
19	17 cm	2 cm	34 cm ²	Rectangle
20	4 cm	14 cm	56 cm ²	Rectangle
21	18 cm	3 cm	54 cm ²	Rectangle
22	5 cm	15 cm	75 cm ²	Rectangle
23	19 cm	2 cm	38 cm ²	Rectangle
24	6 cm	16 cm	96 cm ²	Rectangle
25	20 cm	3 cm	60 cm ²	Rectangle
26	7 cm	17 cm	119 cm ²	Rectangle
27	21 cm	2 cm	42 cm ²	Rectangle
28	8 cm	18 cm	144 cm ²	Rectangle
29	22 cm	3 cm	66 cm ²	Rectangle
30	9 cm	19 cm	171 cm ²	Rectangle
31	23 cm	2 cm	46 cm ²	Rectangle
32	10 cm	20 cm	200 cm ²	Rectangle
33	24 cm	3 cm	72 cm ²	Rectangle
34	11 cm	21 cm	231 cm ²	Rectangle
35	25 cm	2 cm	50 cm ²	Rectangle
36	12 cm	22 cm	264 cm ²	Rectangle
37	26 cm	3 cm	78 cm ²	Rectangle
38	13 cm	23 cm	299 cm ²	Rectangle
39	27 cm	2 cm	54 cm ²	Rectangle
40	14 cm	24 cm	336 cm ²	Rectangle
41	28 cm	3 cm	84 cm ²	Rectangle
42	15 cm	25 cm	375 cm ²	Rectangle
43	29 cm	2 cm	58 cm ²	Rectangle
44	16 cm	26 cm	416 cm ²	Rectangle
45	30 cm	3 cm	90 cm ²	Rectangle
46	17 cm	27 cm	459 cm ²	Rectangle
47	31 cm	2 cm	62 cm ²	Rectangle
48	18 cm	28 cm	504 cm ²	Rectangle
49	32 cm	3 cm	96 cm ²	Rectangle
50	19 cm	29 cm	551 cm ²	Rectangle
51	33 cm	2 cm	66 cm ²	Rectangle
52	20 cm	30 cm	600 cm ²	Rectangle
53	34 cm	3 cm	102 cm ²	Rectangle
54	21 cm	31 cm	651 cm ²	Rectangle
55	35 cm	2 cm	70 cm ²	Rectangle
56	22 cm	32 cm	704 cm ²	Rectangle
57	36 cm	3 cm	108 cm ²	Rectangle
58	23 cm	33 cm	759 cm ²	Rectangle
59	37 cm	2 cm	74 cm ²	Rectangle
60	24 cm	34 cm	816 cm ²	Rectangle
61	38 cm	3 cm	114 cm ²	Rectangle
62	25 cm	35 cm	875 cm ²	Rectangle
63	39 cm	2 cm	78 cm ²	Rectangle
64	26 cm	36 cm	936 cm ²	Rectangle
65	40 cm	3 cm	120 cm ²	Rectangle
66	27 cm	37 cm	1001 cm ²	Rectangle
67	41 cm	2 cm	82 cm ²	Rectangle
68	28 cm	38 cm	1064 cm ²	Rectangle
69	42 cm	3 cm	126 cm ²	Rectangle
70	29 cm	39 cm	1131 cm ²	Rectangle
71	43 cm	2 cm	86 cm ²	Rectangle
72	30 cm	40 cm	1200 cm ²	Rectangle
73	44 cm	3 cm	132 cm ²	Rectangle
74	31 cm	41 cm	1271 cm ²	Rectangle
75	45 cm	2 cm	90 cm ²	Rectangle
76	32 cm	42 cm	1344 cm ²	Rectangle
77	46 cm	3 cm	138 cm ²	Rectangle
78	33 cm	43 cm	1419 cm ²	Rectangle
79	47 cm	2 cm	94 cm ²	Rectangle
80	34 cm	44 cm	1496 cm ²	Rectangle
81	48 cm	3 cm	144 cm ²	Rectangle
82	35 cm	45 cm	1575 cm ²	Rectangle
83	49 cm	2 cm	98 cm ²	Rectangle
84	36 cm	46 cm	1656 cm ²	Rectangle
85	50 cm	3 cm	150 cm ²	Rectangle
86	37 cm	47 cm	1739 cm ²	Rectangle
87	51 cm	2 cm	102 cm ²	Rectangle
88	38 cm	48 cm	1824 cm ²	Rectangle
89	52 cm	3 cm	156 cm ²	Rectangle
90	39 cm	49 cm	1911 cm ²	Rectangle
91	53 cm	2 cm	106 cm ²	Rectangle
92	40 cm	50 cm	2000 cm ²	Rectangle
93	54 cm	3 cm	162 cm ²	Rectangle
94	41 cm	51 cm	2091 cm ²	Rectangle
95	55 cm	2 cm	110 cm ²	Rectangle
96	42 cm	52 cm	2184 cm ²	Rectangle
97	56 cm	3 cm	168 cm ²	Rectangle
98	43 cm	53 cm	2279 cm ²	Rectangle
99	57 cm	2 cm	114 cm ²	Rectangle
100	44 cm	54 cm	2376 cm ²	Rectangle

Figure	Base	Height	Area	Notes
1	10 cm	4 cm	20 cm ²	Rectangle
2	8 cm	3 cm	12 cm ²	Rectangle
3	6 cm	5 cm	15 cm ²	Rectangle
4	9 cm	2 cm	18 cm ²	Rectangle
5	7 cm	6 cm	21 cm ²	Rectangle
6	5 cm	8 cm	20 cm ²	Rectangle
7	12 cm	3 cm	18 cm ²	Rectangle
8	4 cm	7 cm	14 cm ²	Rectangle
9	11 cm	2 cm	22 cm ²	Rectangle
10	3 cm	9 cm	18 cm ²	Rectangle
11	13 cm	4 cm	26 cm ²	Rectangle
12	2 cm	10 cm	20 cm ²	Rectangle
13	14 cm	3 cm	21 cm ²	Rectangle
14	1 cm	11 cm	11 cm ²	Rectangle
15	15 cm	2 cm	30 cm ²	Rectangle
16	2 cm	12 cm	24 cm ²	Rectangle
17	16 cm	3 cm	24 cm ²	Rectangle
18	3 cm	13 cm	39 cm ²	Rectangle
19	17 cm	2 cm	34 cm ²	Rectangle
20	4 cm	14 cm	56 cm ²	Rectangle
21	18 cm	3 cm	54 cm ²	Rectangle
22	5 cm	15 cm	75 cm ²	Rectangle
23	19 cm	2 cm	38 cm ²	Rectangle
24	6 cm	16 cm	96 cm ²	Rectangle
25	20 cm	3 cm	60 cm ²	Rectangle
26	7 cm	17 cm	119 cm ²	Rectangle
27	21 cm	2 cm	42 cm ²	Rectangle
28	8 cm	18 cm	144 cm ²	Rectangle
29	22 cm	3 cm	66 cm ²	Rectangle
30	9 cm	19 cm	171 cm ²	Rectangle
31	23 cm	2 cm	46 cm ²	Rectangle
32	10 cm	20 cm	200 cm ²	Rectangle
33	24 cm	3 cm	72 cm ²	Rectangle
34	11 cm	21 cm	231 cm ²	Rectangle
35	25 cm	2 cm	50 cm ²	Rectangle
36	12 cm	22 cm	264 cm ²	Rectangle
37	26 cm	3 cm	78 cm ²	Rectangle
38	13 cm	23 cm	299 cm ²	Rectangle
39	27 cm	2 cm	54 cm ²	Rectangle
40	14 cm	24 cm	336 cm ²	Rectangle
41	28 cm	3 cm	84 cm ²	Rectangle
42	15 cm	25 cm	375 cm ²	Rectangle
43	29 cm	2 cm	58 cm ²	Rectangle
44	16 cm	26 cm	416 cm ²	Rectangle
45	30 cm	3 cm	90 cm ²	Rectangle
46	17 cm	27 cm	459 cm ²	Rectangle
47	31 cm	2 cm	62 cm ²	Rectangle
48	18 cm	28 cm	504 cm ²	Rectangle
49	32 cm	3 cm	96 cm ²	Rectangle
50	19 cm	29 cm	551 cm ²	Rectangle
51	33 cm	2 cm	66 cm ²	Rectangle
52	20 cm	30 cm	600 cm ²	Rectangle
53	34 cm	3 cm	102 cm ²	Rectangle
54	21 cm	31 cm	651 cm ²	Rectangle
55	35 cm	2 cm	70 cm ²	Rectangle
56	22 cm	32 cm	704 cm ²	Rectangle
57	36 cm	3 cm	108 cm ²	Rectangle
58	23 cm	33 cm	759 cm ²	Rectangle
59	37 cm	2 cm	74 cm ²	Rectangle
60	24 cm	34 cm	816 cm ²	Rectangle
61	38 cm	3 cm	114 cm ²	Rectangle
62	25 cm	35 cm	875 cm ²	Rectangle
63	39 cm	2 cm	78 cm ²	Rectangle
64	26 cm	36 cm	936 cm ²	Rectangle
65	40 cm	3 cm	120 cm ²	Rectangle
66	27 cm	37 cm	1001 cm ²	Rectangle
67	41 cm	2 cm	82 cm ²	Rectangle
68	28 cm	38 cm	1064 cm ²	Rectangle
69	42 cm	3 cm	126 cm ²	Rectangle
70	29 cm	39 cm	1131 cm ²	Rectangle
71	43 cm	2 cm	86 cm ²	Rectangle
72	30 cm	40 cm	1200 cm ²	Rectangle
73	44 cm	3 cm	132 cm ²	Rectangle
74	31 cm	41 cm	1271 cm ²	Rectangle
75	45 cm	2 cm	90 cm ²	Rectangle
76	32 cm	42 cm	1344 cm ²	Rectangle
77	46 cm	3 cm	138 cm ²	Rectangle
78	33 cm	43 cm	1419 cm ²	Rectangle
79	47 cm	2 cm	94 cm ²	Rectangle
80	34 cm	44 cm	1496 cm ²	Rectangle
81	48 cm	3 cm	144 cm ²	Rectangle
82	35 cm	45 cm	1575 cm ²	Rectangle
83	49 cm	2 cm	98 cm ²	Rectangle
84	36 cm	46 cm	1656 cm ²	Rectangle
85	50 cm	3 cm	150 cm ²	Rectangle
86	37 cm	47 cm	1739 cm ²	Rectangle
87	51 cm	2 cm	102 cm ²	Rectangle
88	38 cm	48 cm	1824 cm ²	Rectangle
89	52 cm	3 cm	156 cm ²	Rectangle
90	39 cm	49 cm	1911 cm ²	Rectangle
91	53 cm	2 cm	106 cm ²	Rectangle
92	40 cm	50 cm	2000 cm ²	Rectangle
93	54 cm	3 cm	162 cm ²	Rectangle
94	41 cm	51 cm	2091 cm ²	Rectangle
95	55 cm	2 cm	110 cm ²	Rectangle
96	42 cm	52 cm	2184 cm ²	Rectangle
97	56 cm	3 cm	168 cm ²	Rectangle
98	43 cm	53 cm	2279 cm ²	Rectangle
99	57 cm	2 cm	114 cm ²	Rectangle
100	44 cm	54 cm	2376 cm ²	Rectangle

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST: YEAR B (1979, 1982, 1985)

1st Sunday	Psa. 149	555	Deut. 4:32-34, 39-40	Rom. 8:12-17	Matt. 28:16-20
2nd Sunday	Psa. 81:1-10	606	Deut. 5:12-15	II Cor. 4:7-11	Mark 2:23-3:6
3rd Sunday	Psa. 61:1-5, 8	570	Gen. 3:9-15	II Cor. 4:13-5:1	Mark 3:20-35
4th Sunday	Psa. 92	611	Ezek. 17:22-24	II Cor. 5:6-10	Mark 4:26-34
5th Sunday	Psa. 107:1-3, 23-32	574	Job 38:1-11, 16-18	II Cor. 5:14-17	Mark 4:35-41
6th Sunday	Psa. 30	557	Lam. 3:22-33 ¹⁵	II Cor. 8:1-9, 13-15	Mark 5:21-43
7th Sunday	Psa. 123	602	Ezek. 2:1-5	II Cor. 12:7-10	Mark 6:1-6
8th Sunday	Psa. 85:7-13	575	Amos 7:10-15	Eph. 1:3-14	Mark 6:7-13
9th Sunday	Psa. 23	556	Jer. 23:1-6	Eph. 2:13-22	Mark 6:30-44
10th Sunday	Psa. 145	594	II Kings 4:42-44	Eph. 4:1-6, 11-16	John 6:1-15
11th Sunday	Psa. 78:14-20, 23-29	572	Exod. 16:2-15	Eph. 4:17-25	John 6:24-35
12th Sunday	Psa. 34:1-8	566	I Kings 19:4-8	Eph. 4:30-5:2	John 6:41-52
13th Sunday	Psa. 34:9-14	567	Prov. 9:1-6	Eph. 5:15-20	John 6:51-59
14th Sunday	Psa. 34:15-22	578	Josh. 24:1-2a, 14-18	Eph. 5:21-33	John 6:60-69
15th Sunday	Psa. 15	586	Deut. 4:1-8	James 1:17-22, 26-27	Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23
16th Sunday	Psa. 146	604	Isa. 35:4-7a	James 2:1-5	Mark 7:31-37
17th Sunday	Psa. 116:1-9	588	Isa. 50:4-10	James 2:14-18	Mark 8:27-38
18th Sunday	Psa. 54	601	Jer. 11:18-20 ¹⁶	James 3:13-4:3	Mark 9:30-37
19th Sunday	Psa. 135:1-7, 13-14	603	Num. 11:24-30	James 5:1-6	Mark 9:38-50
20th Sunday	Psa. 128	607	Gen. 2:18-24	Heb. 2:9-13	Mark 10:2-16
21st Sunday	Psa. 90:1-8, 12-17	579	Prov. 3:13-20 ¹⁷	Heb. 3:1-6	Mark 10:17-30
22nd Sunday	Psa. 91:9-16	595	Isa. 53:10-12	Heb. 4:12-16	Mark 10:35-45
23rd Sunday	Psa. 126	596	Jer. 31:7-9	Heb. 4:2-10	Mark 10:46-52
24th Sunday	Psa. 119:1-16	593	Deut. 6:1-9	Heb. 7:23-28	Mark 12:28-34
25th Sunday	Psa. 107:1-3, 33-43	589	I Kings 17:8-16	Heb. 9:24-28	Mark 12:38-44
26th Sunday	Psa. 16	613	Dan. 12:1-4	Heb. 10:11-18	Mark 13:14-23
27th Sunday	Psa. 111	564	Dan. 7:9-10	Heb. 10:31-39	Mark 13:24-32
Last Sunday	Psa. 93	582	Dan. 7:13-14	Rev. 1:4b-8	John 18:33-37
All Saints'	Psa. 24:1-6	566	Rev. 7:2-4, 9-14	I John 3:1-3	Matt. 5:1-12

ADVENT: YEAR C (1976, 1979, 1982)

1st Sunday	Psa. 25:1-10	562	Jer. 33:14-16	I Thess. 3:9-4:2	Luke 21:25-36
2nd Sunday	Psa. 126	597	Isa. 9:2, 6-7 ¹⁸	Phil. 1:3-11	Luke 3:1-6
3rd Sunday	Isa. 12:2-6	612	Zeph. 3:14-18a	Phil. 4:4-9	Luke 3:7-18
4th Sunday	Psa. 80:1-7	561	Mic. 5:1-5a	Heb. 10:5-10	Luke 1:39-49

CHRISTMAS SEASON: YEAR C (1976/77, 1979/80, 1982/83)

Christmas	Psa. 97	585	Isa. 52:6-10	Heb. 1:1-9	John 1:1-18
1st Sunday	Psa. 111	590	Isa. 60:13-21 ¹⁹	Gal. 4:4-7	Luke 2:41-52
2nd Sunday	Psa. 147:12-20	580	Job 28:20-28 ²⁰	I Cor. 1:18-25	Luke 2:36-40

EPIPHANY SEASON: YEAR C (1977, 1980, 1983) 1986.

Epiphany	Psa. 72:1-19	577	Isa. 60:1-6	Eph. 3:1-12	Matt. 2:1-12
1st Sunday	Psa. 29:1-4, 9-10	583	Isa. 42:1-7	Acts 10:34-38	Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
2nd Sunday	Psa. 36:5-10	568	Isa. 62:1-5	I Cor. 12:3-11	John 2:1-12
3rd Sunday	Psa. 113	563	Neh. 8:1-4a, 5-6, 8-10	I Cor. 12:12-30	Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21
4th Sunday	Psa. 71:1-6, 15-17	554	Jer. 1:4-10	I Cor. 12:31-13:13	Luke 4:21-30
5th Sunday	Psa. 138	599	Isa. 6:1-8	I Cor. 15:1-11	Luke 5:1-11
6th Sunday	Psa. 1	564	Jer. 17:5-10	I Cor. 15:12-20	Luke 6:17-26
7th Sunday	Psa. 37:3-10	587	Gen. 45:3-8a, 15	I Cor. 15:35-38a, 42-50	Luke 6:27-38
8th Sunday	Psa. 92	578	Isa. 55:5, 10-13 ²¹	I Cor. 15:50-58	Luke 6:39-45
Last Sunday	Psa. 99:1-5	584	Isa. 34:1-12	II Cor. 3:12-4:2	Luke 9:28-36

LENT: YEAR C (1977, 1980, 1983) 1986, 1989

Ash	Psa. 51:1-17	571	Zech. 7:4-10	I Cor. 9:19-27	Luke 5:29-35
Wednesday	Psa. 91	581	Deut. 26:5-11	Rom. 10:8-13	Luke 4:1-13
1st Sunday	Psa. 27:7-18	569	Gen. 15:5-12, 17-18	Phil. 3:17-4:1	Luke 13:31-35
2nd Sunday	Psa. 103:1-11	558	Exod. 3:1-8b, 10-15	I Cor. 10:1-13	Luke 13:1-9
3rd Sunday	Psa. 34:1-8	598	Josh. 5:9-12	II Cor. 5:16-21	Luke 15:11-32
4th Sunday	Psa. 28:1-3, 6-9	615	Isa. 43:16-21	Phil. 3:8-14	John 8:1-11
5th Sunday	Psa. 31:1-5, 9-16	559	Deut. 32:36-39	Phil. 2:5-11	Luke 22:14-23:56
Palm Sunday	Psa. 36:5-10	572	Isa. 42:1-9	Heb. 9:11-15	John 12:1-11
Monday	Psa. 71:1-12, 15, 17	567	Isa. 49:1-9a	I Cor. 1:18-31	John 12:37-50
Tuesday	Psa. 70:1-2, 4-5	578	Isa. 50:4-9	Rom. 5:6-11	Matt. 26:14-25
Wednesday	Psa. 116:12-19	591	Num. 9:1-3, 11-12	Heb. 10:16-30	Luke 22:7-20
Thursday	Psa. 22:1-8, 19-31	559	Hos. 6:1-6	Heb. 9:15-22	Matt. 27:31-50
Good Friday					

SEASON OF EASTER: YEAR C (1977, 1980, 1983)

Easter Eve	Same as Year A except for the final lesson				Luke 24:1-12
Easter Day	Ps. 118:1-2, 14-24	592	Exod. 15:1-11	I Cor. 15:1-11	Luke 24:1-11
2nd Sunday	Ps. 149	605	Acts 5:12-16	Rev. 1:9-19	John 20:19-31
3rd Sunday	Ps. 30	600	Acts 5:27-42	Rev. 5:11-14	John 21:1-19
4th Sunday	Ps. 100	560	Acts 13:14, 43-52	Rev. 7:9-17	John 10:22-30
5th Sunday	Ps. 145:1-13	565	Acts 14:19-28	Rev. 21:1-5	John 13:31-35
6th Sunday	Ps. 67	576	Acts 15:1-6, 22-29	Rev. 21:10-14, 22-23	John 14:23-29
Ascension	Ps. 110	561	Acts 1:1-11	Eph. 1:16-23	Luke 24:44-53
7th Sunday	Ps. 47	561	Acts 7:55-60	Eph. 22:12-14, 16-17, 20	John 17:20-26
Pentecost	Ps. 104:1-4, 24-33	583	Gen. 11:1-9	Acts 2:1-21	John 15:26-27; 16:4b-11

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST: YEAR C (1977, 1980, 1983)

1st Sunday	Ps. 8	555	Prov. 8:22-31	Rom. 5:1-5	John 3:1-16
2nd Sunday	Ps. 117	606	I Kings 8:38-43	Gal. 1:1-10	Luke 7:1-10
3rd Sunday	Ps. 30	570	I Kings 17:17-24	Gal. 1:11-24	Luke 7:11-17
4th Sunday	Ps. 32	611	II Sam. 12:1-10, 13	Gal. 2:11-21	Luke 7:36-8:3
5th Sunday	Ps. 63:1-8	574	Zech. 12:7-10	Gal. 3:23-29	Luke 9:18-24
6th Sunday	Ps. 16	557	I Kings 19:14-21	Gal. 4:31-5:1, 13-18	Luke 9:51-62
7th Sunday	Ps. 66:1-12, 16-20	602	Isa. 66:10-14c	Gal. 6:11-18	Luke 10:1-12, 17-20
8th Sunday	Ps. 69:30, 32-36	575	Deut. 30:9-14	Col. 1:1-12	Luke 10:25-37
9th Sunday	Ps. 15	556	Gen. 18:1-11	Col. 1:21-28	Luke 10:38-42
10th Sunday	Ps. 138	594	Gen. 18:20-33	Col. 2:6-15	Luke 11:1-13
11th Sunday	Ps. 49:1-12	572	Eccl. 1:2; 2:18-26	Col. 3:1-11	Luke 12:13-21
12th Sunday	Ps. 33	566	Gen. 15:1-6 ²²	Heb. 11:1-2, 8-19	Luke 12:32-48
13th Sunday	Ps. 82	567	Jer. 38:1b-13	Heb. 12:1-6	Luke 12:49-56
14th Sunday	Ps. 117	578	Isa. 66:18-23	Heb. 12:7-13	Luke 13:22-30
15th Sunday	Ps. 112	586	Prov. 25:6-22 ²³	Heb. 12:18-24	Luke 14:1, 7-14
16th Sunday	Ps. 10:12-14, 16-18	604	Prov. 9:8-12 ²⁴	Philem. 1-20	Luke 14:25-33
17th Sunday	Ps. 51:1-17	588	Exod. 32:7-14	I Tim. 1:12-17	Luke 15:1-10
18th Sunday	Ps. 113	601	Amos 8:4-8	I Tim. 2:1-8	Luke 16:1-13
19th Sunday	Ps. 146	603	Amos 6:1-7	I Tim. 6:11-16	Luke 16:19-31
20th Sunday	Ps. 95:1-7	607	Hab. 1:1-3; 2:1-4	II Tim. 1:3-14	Luke 17:1-10
21st Sunday	Ps. 98:1-4	579	II Kings 5:9-17	II Tim. 2:8-13	Luke 17:11-19

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST: YEAR C (cont'd.)

22nd Sunday	Ps. 121	595	Exod. 17:8-13	II Tim. 3:14-4:5	Luke 18:1-8
23rd Sunday	Ps. 34:1-2, 15-22	596	Deut. 10:12-22 ²⁵	II Tim. 4:6-8, 16-18	Luke 18:9-14
24th Sunday	Ps. 145	593	Zeph. 1:14-16 ²⁶	II Thess. 1:11-2:2	Luke 19:1-10
25th Sunday	Ps. 148	589	I Chron. 29:10-13 ²⁷	II Thess. 2:15-3:5	Luke 20:27-38
26th Sunday	Ps. 98:1-3	613	Mal. 3:16-4:2a	II Thess. 3:6-13	Luke 21:5-19
27th Sunday	Ps. 98:4-9	564	Mal. 3:1-5; 4:5-6	I Pet. 5:6-11	Luke 17:22-23
Last Sunday	Ps. 46	582	Job 23:1-7	Col. 1:12-20	Luke 23:35-43
All Saints'	Ps. 149	566	Isa. 26:1-4, 8-9, 12-13, 19-21	Rev. 21:9-11, 22-27	John 11:32-44

SPECIAL DAYS²⁸

New Year's Day or Watch Night	580	643	Eccl. 11:6-9; 12:13	Rev. 21:1-6a	Luke 9:57-62
Human Relations Day	573	633	Gen. 1:1-3, 26-31	Acts 10:9-15, 34	Mark 3:31-35
Festival of the Christian Home	588	658	Prov. 31:10-31	Eph. 5:25-6:4	Matt. 19:1-5, 10-14
Heritage Sunday	566	615	Isa. 52:1-2, 7-12	Rom. 5:1-11	Mark 12:28-34a
Independence Day	595	626	Deut. 1:5, 8-18	Gal. 5:13-15	John 8:31-36
Labor Day	555	624	Amos 5:11-15	Col. 3:23-25	John 6:5-14, 26-27
World Order Sunday	596	632	Mic. 4:1-5	James 4:1-12	Matt. 5:43-48
Reformation Day	570	654	Neh. 8:1-3, 5-8	Gal. 3:23-26	John 2:13-16
Drug and Alcohol Concerns Sunday	554	651	Isa. 5:11-12, 20-24	I Cor. 3:16-17	Luke 21:23-26
National Bible Sunday	593	621	Deut. 30:8-20	Rom. 15:4-13	Luke 4:16-21
Thanksgiving Day	575	607	Deut. 8:7-18	II Cor. 9:6-12	Luke 12:16-31

*1st Kingdome
I Chron. 29:10-18
Rev. 1-7, 6-8
Matt 25:31-40*

*13th
I Chron 28:1-3
Matt 20:20-28
Eph 6:10-20*

An Alternate Lectionary with Psalter⁵

ADVENT: YEAR A (1977, 1980, 1983)

1st Sunday	Ps. 122	562 ⁶	Isa. 2:1-5	Rom. 13:8-14	Matt. 24:36-44
2nd Sunday	Ps. 72:1-19	597	Isa. 11:1-10	Rom. 15:4-13	Matt. 3:1-12
3rd Sunday	Ps. 146	612	Isa. 35:1-10	James 5:7-10	Matt. 11:2-11
4th Sunday	Ps. 24	561	Isa. 7:10-15	Rom. 1:1-7	Matt. 1:18-25

CHRISTMAS SEASON: YEAR A (1977/78, 1980/81, 1983/84)

Christmas	Ps. 96	585	Isa. 9:2-7	Titus 2:11-15	Luke 2:1-14
1st Sunday	Ps. 111	590	Eccl. 3:1-9, 14-17	Col. 3:12-21	Matt. 2:13-15, 19-23
2nd Sunday	Ps. 147:12-20	580	Isa. 61:10-62:3*	Eph. 1:3-6, 15-18	John 1:1-18

EPIPHANY SEASON: YEAR A (1978, 1981, 1984)

Epiphany	Ps. 72:1-19	577	Isa. 60:1-6	Eph. 3:1-12	Matt. 2:1-12
1st Sunday	Ps. 29:1-4, 9-10	583	Isa. 42:1-7	Acts 10:34-38	Matt. 3:13-17
2nd Sunday	Ps. 40:1-11	568	Isa. 49:1-7	I Cor. 1:1-9	John 1:29-34
3rd Sunday	Ps. 27:1, 4, 13-14	563	Isa. 9:1-4	I Cor. 1:10-17	Matt. 4:12-23
4th Sunday	Ps. 1	554	Zeph. 2:3; 3:11-13	I Cor. 1:26-31	Matt. 5:1-12
5th Sunday	Ps. 112:4-9	599	Isa. 58:5-12	I Cor. 2:1-5	Matt. 5:13-16
6th Sunday	Ps. 119:1-16	564	Deut. 30:15-20 ⁹	I Cor. 2:6-13	Matt. 5:17-37
7th Sunday	Ps. 103:1-13	587	Lev. 19:1-2, 15-18	I Cor. 3:10-11, 16-23	Matt. 5:38-48
8th Sunday	Ps. 62	573	Isa. 49:8-18	I Cor. 4:1-5	Matt. 6:24-34
Last Sunday	Ps. 2:6-11	584	Exod. 24:12, 15-18	I Cor. 12:31-13:13	Matt. 17:1-9

LENT: YEAR A (1978, 1981, 1984)

Ash	Ps. 51:1-17	571	Joel 2:12-19	II Cor. 5:20 ⁶	Matt. 6:1-6, 16-21
Wednesday				6:1 ⁶	
1st Sunday	Ps. 130	581	Gen. 2:7-9, 15-17; 3:1-7a	Rom. 5:12-19	Matt. 4:1-11
2nd Sunday	Ps. 33:12-22	569	Gen. 12:1-8	Rom. 4:1-5, 13-17	John 4:5-26
3rd Sunday	Ps. 95:1-2, 6-11	558	Exod. 17:3-7	Rom. 8:1-5	John 4:27-42
4th Sunday	Ps. 23	598	I Sam. 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a	Eph. 5:8-14	John 9:1-41
5th Sunday	Ps. 116:1-9	615	Ezek. 37:1-3, 11-14	Rom. 8:6-11	John 11:1-45
Palm Sunday	Ps. 22:1-11	559	Isa. 50:4-9a	Phil. 2:5-11	Matt. 26:14-27:66

LENT: YEAR A (cont'd.)

Monday	Ps. 36:5-10	572	Isa. 42:1-9	Heb. 9:11-15	John 12:1-11
Tuesday	Ps. 71:1-12, 15, 17	567	Isa. 49:1-9a	I Cor. 1:18-31	John 12:37-50
Wednesday	Ps. 70:1-2, 4-5	578	Isa. 50:4-9	Rom. 5:6-11	Matt. 26:14-25
Thursday	Ps. 116:12-19	591	Exod. 12:1-14	I Cor. 11:23-26	John 13:1-15
Good Friday	Ps. 22:1-18	559	Isa. 52:13-53:12	Heb. 4:14-16; 5:7-9	John 18:1-19:42

SEASON OF EASTER: YEAR A (1978, 1981, 1984)

Easter Eve	Gen. 1:1-2:2	Ps. 33:1-11	Gen. 22:1-18	Ps. 33:12-22	
	Exod. 14:15-15:1	Exod. 15:1-6, 17-18	Isa. 54:5-14		
	Ps. 30:2-6, 11-13	Isa. 55:1-11	Isa. 12:2-6	Ezek. 36:16-28	
	Ps. 42:1-7; 43:3-4	Zeph. 3:14-17, 19-20	Ps. 98	Rom. 6:3-11	
Easter Day	Ps. 118:1-2, 14-24	592	Acts 10:34-43	Col. 3:1-11	John 20:1-9
2nd Sunday	Ps. 105:1-7	605	Acts 2:42-47	I Pet. 1:3-9	John 20:19-31
3rd Sunday	Ps. 16	600	Acts 2:22-32	I Pet. 1:17-23	Luke 24:13-35
4th Sunday	Ps. 23	560	Acts 2:14a, 36-41	I Pet. 2:19-25	John 10:1-10
5th Sunday	Ps. 33:1-11	565	Acts 6:1-7	I Pet. 2:1-10	John 14:1-14
6th Sunday	Ps. 66:1-7, 16-20	576	Acts 8:4-8, 14-17	I Pet. 3:8-18	John 14:15-21
Ascension	Ps. 110	561	Acts 1:1-11	Eph. 1:16-23	Matt. 28:16-20
7th Sunday	Ps. 47	561	Acts 1:12-14	I Pet. 4:12-19	John 17:1-11
Pentecost	Ps. 104:1-4, 24-33	583	Acts 2:1-21	I Cor. 12:4-13	John 20:19-23

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST: YEAR A (1978, 1981, 1984)

1st Sunday	Ps. 150	555	Exod. 34:4-6, 8-9	II Cor. 13:5-13	Matt. 28:16-20
2nd Sunday	Ps. 31:1-5, 19-24	606	Deut. 11:18-21, 26-28	Rom. 3:21-28	Matt. 7:21-29
3rd Sunday	Ps. 50:1-15	570	Hos. 6:1-6	Rom. 4:18-25	Matt. 9:9-13
4th Sunday	Ps. 100	611	Exod. 19:2-6a	Rom. 5:6-11	Matt. 9:35-10:8
5th Sunday	Ps. 69:1-18, 34-36	574	Jer. 20:7-13	Rom. 5:12-15	Matt. 10:26-33
6th Sunday	Ps. 89:1-4, 15-18	557	II Kings 4:8-16	Rom. 6:1-11	Matt. 10:34-42
7th Sunday	Ps. 145	602	Zech. 9:9-13	Rom. 7:21-8:6	Matt. 11:25-30
8th Sunday	Ps. 65	575	Isa. 55:10-13	Rom. 8:18-25	Matt. 13:1-23
9th Sunday	Ps. 86:11-17	556	II Sam. 7:18-22 ¹⁰	Rom. 8:26-27	Matt. 13:24-43
10th Sunday	Ps. 119:129-36	594	I Kings 3:5-12	Rom. 8:28-30	Matt. 13:44-52
11th Sunday	Ps. 78:14-20, 23-29	572	Neh. 9:16-20	Rom. 8:35-39	Matt. 14:13-21

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST: YEAR A (cont'd.)

12th Sunday	Ps. 85:8-13	566	I Kings 19:9-18	Rom. 9:1-5	Matt. 14:22-33
13th Sunday	Ps. 67	567	Isa. 56:1, 6-8	Rom. 11:13-16, 29-32	Matt. 15:21-28
14th Sunday	Ps. 138	578	Isa. 22:15-16, 19-23	Rom. 11:33-36	Matt. 16:13-20
15th Sunday	Ps. 26	586	Jer. 15:15-21	Rom. 12:1-8	Matt. 16:21-28
16th Sunday	Ps. 119:33-40	604	Ezek. 33:7-11	Rom. 12:9-18	Matt. 18:15-20
17th Sunday	Ps. 103:1-13	588	Gen. 4:13-16 ¹¹	Rom. 14:5-9	Matt. 18:21-35
18th Sunday	Ps. 27:1-9	601	Isa. 55:6-11	Phil. 1:21-27	Matt. 20:1-16
19th Sunday	Ps. 25:1-10	603	Ezek. 18:25-32	Phil. 2:1-11	Matt. 21:28-32
20th Sunday	Ps. 80:7-15, 18-19	607	Isa. 5:1-7	Phil. 4:4-9	Matt. 21:33-43
21st Sunday	Ps. 23	579	Isa. 25:6-10a	Phil. 4:12-20	Matt. 22:1-14
22nd Sunday	Ps. 96	595	Isa. 45:1-7	I Thess. 1:1-5	Matt. 22:15-22
23rd Sunday	Ps. 18:1-3, 46, 50	596	Exod. 22:21-27	I Thess. 1:2-10	Matt. 22:34-46
24th Sunday	Ps. 131	593	Mal. 1:14b-2:2b, 8-10	I Thess. 2:7-13	Matt. 23:1-12
25th Sunday	Ps. 63:1-7	589	Song of Sol. 3:1-5 ¹²	I Thess. 3:7-13	Matt. 24:1-14
26th Sunday	Ps. 128	613	Prov. 31:10-12, 20, 26-31	I Thess. 4:13-18	Matt. 25:1-13
27th Sunday	Ps. 105:1-7	564	Jer. 26:1-6	I Thess. 5:1-10	Matt. 25:14-15, 19-30
Last Sunday	Ps. 95:1-7	582	Ezek. 34:11-17	I Cor. 15:20-28	Matt. 25:31-46
All Saints'	Ps. 24:1-6	566	Isa. 26:1-4, 8-9, 12-13, 19-21	Rev. 7:9-17	Matt. 5:1-12

ADVENT: YEAR B (1978,1981,1984)

1st Sunday	Ps. 80:1-7	562	Isa. 63:16-64:8	I Cor. 1:3-9	Mark 13:32-37
2nd Sunday	Ps. 85	597	Isa. 40:1-11	II Pet. 3:8-14	Mark 1:1-8
3rd Sunday	Luke 1:46b-55	612	Isa. 61:1-4, 8-11	I Thess. 5:16-24	John 1:6-8, 19-28
4th Sunday	Ps. 89:1-4, 14-18	561	II Sam. 7:1-5, 7-16	Rom. 16:25-27	Luke 1:26-38

CHRISTMAS SEASON: YEAR B (1978/79,1981/82,1984/85)

Christmas	Ps. 98	585	Isa. 62:6-12	Titus 3:4-7	Luke 2:15-20
1st Sunday	Ps. 111	590	Jer. 31:10-13 ¹³	Heb. 2:10-18	Luke 2:22-40
2nd Sunday	Ps. 147:12-20	580	Isa. 61:10-62:3 ¹⁴	Rev. 21:22-22:2	John 1:1-18

EPIPHANY SEASON: YEAR B (1979,1982,1985)

Epiphany	Ps. 72:1-19	577	Isa. 60:1-6	Eph. 3:1-12	Matt. 2:1-12
1st Sunday	Ps. 29:1-4, 9-10	583	Isa. 42:1-7	Acts 10:34-38	Mark 1:4-11

EPIPHANY SEASON: YEAR B (cont'd.)

2nd Sunday	Ps. 67	568	I Sam. 3:1-10	I Cor. 6:12-20	John 1:35-42
3rd Sunday	Ps. 62:5-12	563	Jon. 3:1-5, 10	I Cor. 7:29-31	Mark 1:14-20
4th Sunday	Ps. 1	554	Deut. 18:15-22	I Cor. 7:32-35	Mark 1:21-28
5th Sunday	Ps. 147:1-12	599	Job 7:1-7	I Cor. 9:16-23	Mark 1:29-39
6th Sunday	Ps. 32	564	Lev. 13:1-2, 44-46	I Cor. 10:31-11:1	Mark 1:40-45
7th Sunday	Ps. 41	587	Isa. 43:15-25	II Cor. 1:18-22	Mark 2:1-12
8th Sunday	Ps. 103:1-13	573	Hos. 2:14-23	II Cor. 3:1b-6	Mark 2:18-22
Last Sunday	Ps. 50:1-6	584	II Kings 2:1-12a	II Cor. 4:3-6	Mark 9:2-9

LENT: YEAR B (1979,1982,1985)

Ash	Ps. 51:1-17	571	Joel 2:12-19	James 1:12-18	Mark 2:15-20
Wednesday	Ps. 25:3-9	581	Gen. 9:8-15	I Pet. 3:18-22	Mark 1:12-15
1st Sunday	Ps. 115:1, 9-18	569	Gen. 28:10-17	Rom. 8:31-34	Mark 10:32-45
2nd Sunday	Ps. 19:7-14	558	Exod. 20:1-17	I Cor. 1:22-25	John 2:13-22
3rd Sunday	Ps. 137:1-6	598	II Chron. 36:14-21	Eph. 2:1-10	John 3:14-21
4th Sunday	Ps. 51:10-16	615	Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 5:7-10	John 12:20-33
Palm Sunday	Ps. 22:7-8, 16-19, 22-23	559	Zech. 9:9-12	Phil. 2:5-11	Mark 14:1-15:47
Monday	Ps. 36:5-10	572	Isa. 42:1-9	Heb. 9:11-15	John 12:1-11
Tuesday	Ps. 71:1-12, 15, 17	567	Isa. 49:1-9a	I Cor. 1:18-31	John 12:37-50
Wednesday	Ps. 70:1-2, 4-5	578	Isa. 50:4-9	Rom. 5:6-11	Matt. 26:14-25
Thursday	Ps. 116:12-19	591	Deut. 16:1-8	I Cor. 10:16-21	Mark 14:12-26
Good Friday	Ps. 31:1-5, 9-16	559	Lam. 1:7-12	Heb. 10:14-18	Luke 23:33-46

SEASON OF EASTER: YEAR B (1979,1982,1985)

Easter Eve	Same as Year A except for the final lection				Mark 16:1-8
Easter Day	Ps. 118:1-2, 14-24	592	Isa. 25:6-9	I Pet. 1:3-9	Mark 16:1-8
2nd Sunday	Ps. 148	605	Acts 4:32-37	I John 5:1-6	John 20:19-31
3rd Sunday	Ps. 139:1-12	600	Acts 3:13-15, 17-19	I John 2:1-6	Luke 24:35-49
4th Sunday	Ps. 23	560	Acts 4:5-12	I John 3:1-8	John 10:11-18
5th Sunday	Ps. 22:25-31	565	Acts 9:26-31	I John 3:18-24	John 15:1-8
6th Sunday	Ps. 98	576	Acts 11:5a, 11-18	I John 4:1-11	John 15:9-17
Ascension	Ps. 110	561	Acts 1:1-11	Eph. 1:16-23	Mark 16:15-20
7th Sunday	Ps. 47	561	Acts 1:15-26	I John 4:11-16	John 17:11-19
Pentecost	Ps. 104:1-4, 24-33	583	Joel 2:28-32	Acts 2:1-21	John 16:5-15

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF DATA FOR THE 1960-1961 SEASON

Station	Location	Depth (m)	Temperature (°C)	Salinity (‰)	Density (σ _t)	Speed of Current (cm/sec)	Direction (°)	Time of Day	Remarks
1	Station 1	10	18.5	35.2	1.0245	1.5	135	0800	Clear sky, light breeze
2	Station 2	15	17.8	35.1	1.0242	2.0	140	0900	Light rain, calm
3	Station 3	20	17.2	35.0	1.0240	2.5	145	1000	Overcast, light rain
4	Station 4	25	16.5	34.9	1.0238	3.0	150	1100	Heavy rain, calm
5	Station 5	30	15.8	34.8	1.0235	3.5	155	1200	Thunderstorm, calm
6	Station 6	35	15.2	34.7	1.0233	4.0	160	1300	Clear sky, light breeze
7	Station 7	40	14.5	34.6	1.0230	4.5	165	1400	Light rain, calm
8	Station 8	45	13.8	34.5	1.0228	5.0	170	1500	Overcast, light rain
9	Station 9	50	13.2	34.4	1.0226	5.5	175	1600	Heavy rain, calm
10	Station 10	55	12.5	34.3	1.0224	6.0	180	1700	Thunderstorm, calm
11	Station 11	60	11.8	34.2	1.0222	6.5	185	1800	Clear sky, light breeze
12	Station 12	65	11.2	34.1	1.0220	7.0	190	1900	Light rain, calm
13	Station 13	70	10.5	34.0	1.0218	7.5	195	2000	Overcast, light rain
14	Station 14	75	9.8	33.9	1.0216	8.0	200	2100	Heavy rain, calm
15	Station 15	80	9.2	33.8	1.0214	8.5	205	2200	Thunderstorm, calm
16	Station 16	85	8.5	33.7	1.0212	9.0	210	2300	Clear sky, light breeze
17	Station 17	90	7.8	33.6	1.0210	9.5	215	2400	Light rain, calm
18	Station 18	95	7.2	33.5	1.0208	10.0	220	2500	Overcast, light rain
19	Station 19	100	6.5	33.4	1.0206	10.5	225	2600	Heavy rain, calm
20	Station 20	105	5.8	33.3	1.0204	11.0	230	2700	Thunderstorm, calm

TABLE 2. SUMMARY OF DATA FOR THE 1961-1962 SEASON

Station	Location	Depth (m)	Temperature (°C)	Salinity (‰)	Density (σ _t)	Speed of Current (cm/sec)	Direction (°)	Time of Day	Remarks
1	Station 1	10	19.0	35.3	1.0246	1.8	130	0800	Clear sky, light breeze
2	Station 2	15	18.2	35.2	1.0243	2.2	135	0900	Light rain, calm
3	Station 3	20	17.5	35.1	1.0241	2.8	140	1000	Overcast, light rain
4	Station 4	25	16.8	35.0	1.0239	3.2	145	1100	Heavy rain, calm
5	Station 5	30	16.0	34.9	1.0237	3.8	150	1200	Thunderstorm, calm
6	Station 6	35	15.3	34.8	1.0235	4.2	155	1300	Clear sky, light breeze
7	Station 7	40	14.6	34.7	1.0233	4.8	160	1400	Light rain, calm
8	Station 8	45	13.9	34.6	1.0231	5.2	165	1500	Overcast, light rain
9	Station 9	50	13.2	34.5	1.0229	5.8	170	1600	Heavy rain, calm
10	Station 10	55	12.5	34.4	1.0227	6.2	175	1700	Thunderstorm, calm
11	Station 11	60	11.8	34.3	1.0225	6.8	180	1800	Clear sky, light breeze
12	Station 12	65	11.1	34.2	1.0223	7.2	185	1900	Light rain, calm
13	Station 13	70	10.4	34.1	1.0221	7.8	190	2000	Overcast, light rain
14	Station 14	75	9.7	34.0	1.0219	8.2	195	2100	Heavy rain, calm
15	Station 15	80	9.0	33.9	1.0217	8.8	200	2200	Thunderstorm, calm
16	Station 16	85	8.3	33.8	1.0215	9.2	205	2300	Clear sky, light breeze
17	Station 17	90	7.6	33.7	1.0213	9.8	210	2400	Light rain, calm
18	Station 18	95	6.9	33.6	1.0211	10.2	215	2500	Overcast, light rain
19	Station 19	100	6.2	33.5	1.0209	10.8	220	2600	Heavy rain, calm
20	Station 20	105	5.5	33.4	1.0207	11.2	225	2700	Thunderstorm, calm

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST: YEAR B (1979, 1982, 1985)

1st Sunday	Psa. 149	555	Deut. 4:32-34, 39-40	Rom. 8:12-17	Matt. 28:16-20
2nd Sunday	Psa. 81:1-10	606	Deut. 5:12-15	II Cor. 4:7-11	Mark 2:23-36
3rd Sunday	Psa. 61:1-5, 8	570	Gen. 3:9-15	II Cor. 4:13-5:1	Mark 3:20-35
4th Sunday	Psa. 92	611	Ezek. 17:22-24	II Cor. 5:6-10	Mark 4:26-34
5th Sunday	Psa. 107:1-3, 23-32	574	Job 38:1-11, 16-18	II Cor. 5:14-17	Mark 4:35-41
6th Sunday	Psa. 30	557	Lam. 3:22-33 ¹⁵	II Cor. 8:1-9, 13-15	Mark 5:21-43
7th Sunday	Psa. 123	602	Ezek. 2:1-5	II Cor. 12:7-10	Mark 6:1-6
8th Sunday	Psa. 85:7-13	575	Amos 7:10-15	Eph. 1:3-14	Mark 6:7-13
9th Sunday	Psa. 23	556	Jer. 23:1-6	Eph. 2:13-22	Mark 6:30-44
10th Sunday	Psa. 145	594	II Kings 4:42-44	Eph. 4:1-6, 11-16	John 6:1-15
11th Sunday	Psa. 78:14-20, 23-29	572	Exod. 16:2-15	Eph. 4:17-25	John 6:24-35
12th Sunday	Psa. 34:1-8	566	I Kings 19:4-8	Eph. 4:30-5:2	John 6:41-52
13th Sunday	Psa. 34:9-14	567	Prov. 9:1-6	Eph. 5:15-20	John 6:51-59
14th Sunday	Psa. 34:15-22	578	Josh. 24:1-2a, 14-18	Eph. 5:21-33	John 6:60-69
15th Sunday	Psa. 15	586	Deut. 4:1-8	James 1:17-22, 26-27	Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23
16th Sunday	Psa. 146	604	Isa. 35:4-7a	James 2:1-5	Mark 7:31-37
17th Sunday	Psa. 116:1-9	588	Isa. 50:4-10	James 2:14-18	Mark 8:27-38
18th Sunday	Psa. 54	601	Jer. 11:18-20 ¹⁶	James 3:13-4:3	Mark 9:30-37
19th Sunday	Psa. 135:1-7, 13-14	603	Num. 11:24-30	James 5:1-6	Mark 9:38-50
20th Sunday	Psa. 128	607	Gen. 2:18-24	Heb. 2:9-13	Mark 10:2-16
21st Sunday	Psa. 90:1-8, 12-17	579	Prov. 3:13-20 ¹⁷	Heb. 3:1-6	Mark 10:17-30
22nd Sunday	Psa. 91:9-16	595	Isa. 53:10-12	Heb. 4:12-16	Mark 10:35-45
23rd Sunday	Psa. 126	596	Jer. 31:7-9	Heb. 4:2-10	Mark 10:46-52
24th Sunday	Psa. 119:1-16	593	Deut. 6:1-9	Heb. 7:23-28	Mark 12:28-34
25th Sunday	Psa. 107:1-3, 33-43	589	I Kings 17:8-16	Heb. 9:24-28	Mark 12:38-44
26th Sunday	Psa. 16	613	Dan. 12:1-4	Heb. 10:11-18	Mark 13:14-23
27th Sunday	Psa. 111	564	Dan. 7:9-10	Heb. 10:31-39	Mark 13:24-32
Last Sunday	Psa. 93	582	Dan. 7:13-14	Rev. 1:4b-8	John 18:33-37
All Saints'	Psa. 24:1-6	566	Rev. 7:2-4, 9-14	I John 3:1-3	Matt. 5:1-12

ADVENT: YEAR C (1976, 1979, 1982)

1st Sunday	Psa. 25:1-10	562	Jer. 33:14-16	I Thess. 3:9-4:2	Luke 21:25-36
2nd Sunday	Psa. 126	597	Isa. 9:2, 6-7 ¹⁸	Phil. 1:3-11	Luke 3:1-6
3rd Sunday	Isa. 12:2-6	612	Zeph. 3:14-18a	Phil. 4:4-9	Luke 3:7-18
4th Sunday	Psa. 80:1-7	561	Mic. 5:1-5a	Heb. 10:5-10	Luke 1:39-49

CHRISTMAS SEASON: YEAR C (1976/77, 1979/80, 1982/83)

Christmas	Psa. 97	585	Isa. 52:6-10	Heb. 1:1-9	John 1:1-18
1st Sunday	Psa. 111	590	Isa. 60:13-21 ¹⁹	Gal. 4:4-7	Luke 2:41-52
2nd Sunday	Psa. 147:12-20	580	Job 28:20-28 ²⁰	I Cor. 1:18-25	Luke 2:36-40

EPIPHANY SEASON: YEAR C (1977, 1980, 1983) 1986.

Epiphany	Psa. 72:1-19	577	Isa. 60:1-6	Eph. 3:1-12	Matt. 2:1-12
1st Sunday	Psa. 29:1-4, 9-10	583	Isa. 42:1-7	Acts 10:34-38	Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
2nd Sunday	Psa. 36:5-10	568	Isa. 62:1-5	I Cor. 12:3-11	John 2:1-12
3rd Sunday	Psa. 113	563	Neh. 8:1-4a, 5-6, 8-10	I Cor. 12:12-30	Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21
4th Sunday	Psa. 71:1-6, 15-17	554	Jer. 1:4-10	I Cor. 12:31-13:13	Luke 4:21-30
5th Sunday	Psa. 138	599	Isa. 6:1-8	I Cor. 15:1-11	Luke 5:1-11
6th Sunday	Psa. 1	564	Jer. 17:5-10	I Cor. 15:12-20	Luke 6:17-26
7th Sunday	Psa. 37:3-10	587	Gen. 45:3-8a, 15	I Cor. 15:35-38a, 42-50	Luke 6:27-38
8th Sunday	Psa. 92	578	Isa. 55:5, 10-13 ²¹	I Cor. 15:50-58	Luke 6:39-45
Last Sunday	Psa. 99:1-5	584	Deut. 34:1-12	II Cor. 3:12-4:2	Luke 9:28-36

LENT: YEAR C (1977, 1980, 1983) 1986, 1989

Ash	Psa. 51:1-17	571	Zech. 7:4-10	I Cor. 9:19-27	Luke 5:29-35
Wednesday					
1st Sunday	Psa. 91	581	Deut. 26:5-11	Rom. 10:8-13	Luke 4:1-13
2nd Sunday	Psa. 27:7-18	569	Gen. 15:5-12, 17-18	Phil. 3:17-4:1	Luke 13:31-35
3rd Sunday	Psa. 103:1-11	558	Exod. 3:1-8b, 10-15	I Cor. 10:1-13	Luke 13:1-9
4th Sunday	Psa. 34:1-8	598	Josh. 5:9-12	II Cor. 5:16-21	Luke 15:11-32
5th Sunday	Psa. 28:1-3, 6-9	615	Isa. 43:16-21	Phil. 3:8-14	John 8:1-11
Palm Sunday	Psa. 31:1-5, 9-16	559	Deut. 32:36-39	Phil. 2:5-11	Luke 22:14-23:56
Monday	Psa. 36:5-10	572	Isa. 42:1-9	Heb. 9:11-15	John 12:1-11
Tuesday	Psa. 71:1-12, 15, 17	567	Isa. 49:1-9a	I Cor. 1:18-31	John 12:37-50
Wednesday	Psa. 70:1-2, 4-5	578	Isa. 50:4-9	Rom. 5:6-11	Matt. 26:14-25
Thursday	Psa. 116:12-19	591	Num. 9:1-3, 11-12	Heb. 10:16-30	Matt. 22:7-20
Good Friday	Psa. 22:1-8, 19-31	559	Hos. 6:1-6	Heb. 9:15-22	Matt. 27:31-50

SEASON OF EASTER: YEAR C (1977, 1980, 1983)

Easter Eve	Same as Year A except for the final lection				Luke 24:1-12
Easter Day	Ps. 118:1-2, 14-24	592	Exod. 15:1-11	I Cor. 15:1-11	Luke 24:1-11
2nd Sunday	Ps. 149	605	Acts 5:12-16	Rev. 1:9-19	John 20:19-31
3rd Sunday	Ps. 30	600	Acts 5:27-42	Rev. 5:11-14	John 21:1-19
4th Sunday	Ps. 100	560	Acts 13:14, 43-52	Rev. 7:9-17	John 10:22-30
5th Sunday	Ps. 145:1-13	565	Acts. 14:19-28	Rev. 21:1-5	John 13:31-35
6th Sunday	Ps. 67	576	Acts 15:1-6, 22-29	Rev. 21:10-14, 22-23	John 14:23-29
Ascension	Ps. 110	561	Acts 1:1-11	Eph. 1:16-23	Luke 24:44-53
7th Sunday	Ps. 47	561	Acts 7:55-60	Rev. 22:12-14, 16-17, 20	John 17:20-26
Pentecost	Ps. 104:1-4, 24-33	583	Gen. 11:1-9	Acts 2:1-21	John 15:26-27; 16:4b-11

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST: YEAR C (1977, 1980, 1983)

1st Sunday	Ps. 8	555	Prov. 8:22-31	Rom. 5:1-5	John 3:1-16
2nd Sunday	Ps. 117	606	I Kings 8:38-43	Gal. 1:1-10	Luke 7:1-10
3rd Sunday	Ps. 30	570	I Kings 17:17-24	Gal. 1:11-24	Luke 7:11-17
4th Sunday	Ps. 32	611	II Sam. 12:1-10, 13	Gal. 2:11-21	Luke 7:36-8:3
5th Sunday	Ps. 63:1-8	574	Zech. 12:7-10	Gal. 3:23-29	Luke 9:18-24
6th Sunday	Ps. 16	557	I Kings 19:14-21	Gal. 4:31-5:1, 13-18	Luke 9:51-62
7th Sunday	Ps. 66:1-12, 16-20	602	Isa. 66:10-14c	Gal. 6:11-18	Luke 10:1-12, 17-20
8th Sunday	Ps. 69:30, 32-36	575	Deut. 30:9-14	Col. 1:1-12	Luke 10:25-37
9th Sunday	Ps. 15	556	Gen. 18:1-11	Col. 1:21-28	Luke 10:38-42
10th Sunday	Ps. 138	594	Gen. 18:20-33	Col. 2:6-15	Luke 11:1-13
11th Sunday	Ps. 49:1-12	572	Eccl. 1:2; 2:18-26	Col. 3:1-11	Luke 12:13-21
12th Sunday	Ps. 33	566	Gen. 15:1-6 ²²	Heb. 11:1-2, 8-19	Luke 12:32-48
13th Sunday	Ps. 82	567	Jer. 38:1b-13	Heb. 12:1-6	Luke 12:49-56
14th Sunday	Ps. 117	578	Isa. 66:18-23	Heb. 12:7-13	Luke 13:22-30
15th Sunday	Ps. 112	586	Prov. 25:6-22 ²³	Heb. 12:18-24	Luke 14:1, 7-14
16th Sunday	Ps. 10:12-14, 16-18	604	Prov. 9:8-12 ²⁴	Philem. 1-20	Luke 14:25-33
17th Sunday	Ps. 51:1-17	588	Exod. 32:7-14	I Tim. 1:12-17	Luke 15:1-10
18th Sunday	Ps. 113	601	Amos 8:4-8	I Tim. 2:1-8	Luke 16:1-13
19th Sunday	Ps. 146	603	Amos 6:1-7	I Tim. 6:11-16	Luke 16:19-31
20th Sunday	Ps. 95:1-7	607	Hab. 1:1-3; 2:1-4	II Tim. 1:3-14	Luke 17:1-10
21st Sunday	Ps. 98:1-4	579	II Kings 5:9-17	II Tim. 2:8-13	Luke 17:11-19

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST: YEAR C (cont'd.)

22nd Sunday	Ps. 121	595	Exod. 17:8-13	II Tim. 3:14-4:5	Luke 18:1-8
23rd Sunday	Ps. 34:1-2, 15-22	596	Deut. 10:12-22 ²⁵	II Tim. 4:6-8, 16-18	Luke 18:9-14
24th Sunday	Ps. 145	593	Zeph. 1:14-16 ²⁶	II Thess. 1:11-2:2	Luke 19:1-10
25th Sunday	Ps. 148	589	I Chron. 29:10-13 ²⁷	II Thess. 2:15-3:5	Luke 20:27-38
26th Sunday	Ps. 98:1-3	613	Mal. 3:16-4:2a	II Thess. 3:6-13	Luke 21:5-19
27th Sunday	Ps. 98:4-9	564	Mal. 3:1-5; 4:5-6	I Pet. 5:6-11	Luke 17:22-23
Last Sunday	Ps. 46	582	Job 23:1-7	Col. 1:12-20	Luke 23:35-43
All Saints'	Ps. 149	566	Isa. 26:1-4, 8-9, 12-13, 19-21	Rev. 21:9-11, 22-27	John 11:32-44

SPECIAL DAYS²⁸

New Year's Day or Watch Night	580	643	Eccl. 11:6-9; 12:13	Rev. 21:1-6a	Luke 9:57-62
Human Relations Day	573	633	Gen. 1:1-3, 26-31	Acts 10:9-15, 34	Mark 3:31-35
Festival of the Christian Home	588	658	Prov. 31:10-31	Eph. 5:25-6:4	Matt. 19:1-5, 10-14
Heritage Sunday	566	615	Isa. 52:1-2, 7-12	Rom. 5:1-11	Mark 12:28-34a
Independence Day	595	626	Deut. 1:5, 8-18	Gal. 5:13-15	John 8:31-36
Labor Day	555	624	Amos 5:11-15	Col. 3:23-25	John 6:5-14, 26-27
World Order Sunday	596	632	Mic. 4:1-5	James 4:1-12	Matt. 5:43-48
Reformation Day	570	654	Neh. 8:1-3, 5-8	Gal. 3:23-26	John 2:13-16
Drug and Alcohol Concerns Sunday	554	651	Isa. 5:11-12, 20-24	I Cor. 3:16-17	Luke 21:23-26
National Bible Sunday	593	621	Deut. 30:8-20	Rom. 15:4-13	Luke 4:16-21
Thanksgiving Day	575	607	Deut. 8:7-18	II Cor. 9:6-12	Luke 12:16-31

1st Kingdomtide
1 Chron. 29:10-18
Rev. 1-4:6-8
Matt 25:31-40

13th
1 Chron 28:1-3
Matt 20:20-28
Eph 6:10-20

Parameter	Value	Unit	Significance	Notes
Mean	10.5	g	0.001	
SD	2.5	g	0.001	
Min	5.0	g	0.001	
Max	15.0	g	0.001	
Median	10.0	g	0.001	
Q1	8.0	g	0.001	
Q3	12.0	g	0.001	
Range	10.0	g	0.001	
Skewness	0.5		0.001	
Kurtosis	1.0		0.001	
Mean	10.5	g	0.001	
SD	2.5	g	0.001	
Min	5.0	g	0.001	
Max	15.0	g	0.001	
Median	10.0	g	0.001	
Q1	8.0	g	0.001	
Q3	12.0	g	0.001	
Range	10.0	g	0.001	
Skewness	0.5		0.001	
Kurtosis	1.0		0.001	

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Parameter	Value	Unit	Significance	Notes
Mean	10.5	g	0.001	
SD	2.5	g	0.001	
Min	5.0	g	0.001	
Max	15.0	g	0.001	
Median	10.0	g	0.001	
Q1	8.0	g	0.001	
Q3	12.0	g	0.001	
Range	10.0	g	0.001	
Skewness	0.5		0.001	
Kurtosis	1.0		0.001	
Mean	10.5	g	0.001	
SD	2.5	g	0.001	
Min	5.0	g	0.001	
Max	15.0	g	0.001	
Median	10.0	g	0.001	
Q1	8.0	g	0.001	
Q3	12.0	g	0.001	
Range	10.0	g	0.001	
Skewness	0.5		0.001	
Kurtosis	1.0		0.001	

Handwritten notes and signatures at the bottom right.

An Alternate Lectionary with Psalter^s

ADVENT: YEAR A (1977, 1980, 1983)

1st Sunday	Ps. 122	562*	Isa. 2:1-5	Rom. 13:8-14	Matt. 24:36-44
2nd Sunday	Ps. 72:1-19	597	Isa. 11:1-10	Rom. 15:4-13	Matt. 3:1-12
3rd Sunday	Ps. 146	612	Isa. 35:1-10	James 5:7-10	Matt. 11:2-11
4th Sunday	Ps. 24	561	Isa. 7:10-15	Rom. 1:1-7	Matt. 1:18-25

CHRISTMAS SEASON: YEAR A (1977/78, 1980/81, 1983/84)

Christmas	Ps. 96	585	Isa. 9:2-7	Titus 2:11-15	Luke 2:1-14
1st Sunday	Ps. 111	590	Eccl. 3:1-9, 14-17	Col. 3:12-21	Matt. 2:13-15, 19-23
2nd Sunday	Ps. 147:12-20	580	Isa. 61:10-62:3*	Eph. 1:3-6, 15-18	John 1:1-18

EPIPHANY SEASON: YEAR A (1978, 1981, 1984)

Epiphany	Ps. 72:1-19	577	Isa. 60:1-6	Eph. 3:1-12	Matt. 2:1-12
1st Sunday	Ps. 29:1-4, 9-10	583	Isa. 42:1-7	Acts 10:34-38	Matt. 3:13-17
2nd Sunday	Ps. 40:1-11	568	Isa. 49:1-7	I Cor. 1:1-9	John 1:29-34
3rd Sunday	Ps. 27:1, 4, 13-14	563	Isa. 9:1-4	I Cor. 1:10-17	Matt. 4:12-23
4th Sunday	Ps. 1	554	Zeph. 2:3, 3:11-13	I Cor. 1:26-31	Matt. 5:1-12
5th Sunday	Ps. 112:4-9	599	Isa. 58:5-12	I Cor. 2:1-5	Matt. 5:13-16
6th Sunday	Ps. 119:1-16	564	Deut. 30:15-20*	I Cor. 2:6-13	Matt. 5:17-37
7th Sunday	Ps. 103:1-13	587	Lev. 19:1-2, 15-18	I Cor. 3:10-11, 16-23	Matt. 5:38-48
8th Sunday	Ps. 62	573	Isa. 49:8-18	I Cor. 4:1-5	Matt. 6:24-34
Last Sunday	Ps. 2:6-11	584	Exod. 24:12, 15-18	I Cor. 12:31-13:13	Matt. 17:1-9

LENT: YEAR A (1978, 1981, 1984)

Ash	Ps. 51:1-17	571	Joel 2:12-19	II Cor. 5:20b-6:16	Matt. 6:1-6, 16-21
Wednesday					
1st Sunday	Ps. 130	581	Gen. 2:7-9, 15-17; 3:1-7a	Rom. 5:12-19	Matt. 4:1-11
2nd Sunday	Ps. 33:12-22	569	Gen. 12:1-8	Rom. 4:1-5, 13-17	John 4:5-26
3rd Sunday	Ps. 95:1-2, 6-11	558	Exod. 17:3-7	Rom. 8:1-5	John 4:27-42
4th Sunday	Ps. 23	598	I Sam. 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a	Eph. 5:8-14	John 9:1-41
5th Sunday	Ps. 116:1-9	615	Ezek. 37:1-3, 11-14	Rom. 8:6-11	John 11:1-45
Palm Sunday	Ps. 22:1-11	559	Isa. 50:4-9a	Phil. 2:5-11	Matt. 26:14-27:66

LENT: YEAR A (cont'd.)

Monday	Ps. 36:5-10	572	Isa. 42:1-9	Heb. 9:11-15	John 12:1-11
Tuesday	Ps. 71:1-12, 15, 17	567	Isa. 49:1-9a	I Cor. 1:18-31	John 12:37-50
Wednesday	Ps. 70:1-2, 4-5	578	Isa. 50:4-9	Rom. 5:6-11	Matt. 26:14-25
Thursday	Ps. 116:12-19	591	Exod. 12:1-14	I Cor. 11:23-26	John 13:1-15
Good Friday	Ps. 22:1-18	559	Isa. 52:13-53:12	Heb. 4:14-16; 5:7-9	John 18:1-19:42

SEASON OF EASTER: YEAR A (1978, 1981, 1984)

Easter Eve	Gen. 1:1-2:2	Ps. 33:1-11	Gen. 22:1-18	Ps. 33:12-22	
	Exod. 14:15-15:1	Exod. 15:1-6, 17-18	Isa. 54:5-14		
	Ps. 30:2-6, 11-13	Isa. 55:1-11	Isa. 12:2-6	Ezek. 36:16-28	
	Ps. 42:1-7; 43:3-4	Zeph. 3:14-17, 19-20	Ps. 98	Rom. 6:3-11	
Easter Day	Ps. 118:1-2, 14-24	592	Acts 10:34-43	Col. 3:1-11	John 20:1-9
2nd Sunday	Ps. 105:1-7	605	Acts 2:42-47	I Pet. 1:3-9	John 20:19-31
3rd Sunday	Ps. 16	600	Acts 2:22-32	I Pet. 1:17-23	Luke 24:13-35
4th Sunday	Ps. 23	560	Acts 2:14a, 36-41	I Pet. 2:19-25	John 10:1-10
5th Sunday	Ps. 33:1-11	565	Acts 6:1-7	I Pet. 2:1-10	John 14:1-14
6th Sunday	Ps. 66:1-7, 16-20	576	Acts 8:4-8, 14-17	I Pet. 3:8-18	John 14:15-21
Ascension	Ps. 110	561	Acts 1:1-11	Eph. 1:16-23	Matt. 28:16-20
7th Sunday	Ps. 47	561	Acts 1:12-14	I Pet. 4:12-19	John 17:1-11
Pentecost	Ps. 104:1-4, 24-33	583	Acts 2:1-21	I Cor. 12:4-13	John 20:19-23

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST: YEAR A (1978, 1981, 1984)

1st Sunday	Ps. 150	555	Exod. 34:4-6, 8-9	II Cor. 13:5-13	Matt. 28:16-20
2nd Sunday	Ps. 31:1-5, 19-24	606	Deut. 11:18-21, 26-28	Rom. 3:21-28	Matt. 7:21-29
3rd Sunday	Ps. 50:1-15	570	Hos. 6:1-6	Rom. 4:18-25	Matt. 9:9-13
4th Sunday	Ps. 100	611	Exod. 19:2-6a	Rom. 5:6-11	Matt. 9:35-10:8
5th Sunday	Ps. 69:1-18, 34-36	574	Jer. 20:7-13	Rom. 5:12-15	Matt. 10:26-33
6th Sunday	Ps. 89:1-4, 15-18	557	II Kings 4:8-16	Rom. 6:1-11	Matt. 10:34-42
7th Sunday	Ps. 145	602	Zech. 9:9-13	Rom. 7:21-8:6	Matt. 11:25-30
8th Sunday	Ps. 65	575	Isa. 55:10-13	Rom. 8:18-25	Matt. 13:1-23
9th Sunday	Ps. 86:11-17	556	II Sam. 7:18-22 ¹⁰	Rom. 8:26-27	Matt. 13:24-43
10th Sunday	Ps. 119:129-36	594	I Kings 3:5-12	Rom. 8:28-30	Matt. 13:44-52
11th Sunday	Ps. 78:14-20, 23-29	572	Neh. 9:16-20	Rom. 8:35-39	Matt. 14:13-21

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST: YEAR A (cont'd.)

12th Sunday	Ps. 85:8-13	566	I Kings 19:9-18	Rom. 9:1-5	Matt. 14:22-33
13th Sunday	Ps. 67	567	Isa. 56:1, 6-8	Rom. 11:13-16, 29-32	Matt. 15:21-28
14th Sunday	Ps. 138	578	Isa. 22:15-16, 19-23	Rom. 11:33-36	Matt. 16:13-20
15th Sunday	Ps. 26	586	Jer. 15:15-21	Rom. 12:1-8	Matt. 16:21-28
16th Sunday	Ps. 119:33-40	604	Ezek. 33:7-11	Rom. 12:9-18	Matt. 18:15-20
17th Sunday	Ps. 103:1-13	588	Gen. 4:13-16 ¹¹	Rom. 14:5-9	Matt. 18:21-35
18th Sunday	Ps. 27:1-9	601	Isa. 55:6-11	Phil. 1:21-27	Matt. 20:1-16
19th Sunday	Ps. 25:1-10	603	Ezek. 18:25-32	Phil. 2:1-11	Matt. 21:28-32
20th Sunday	Ps. 80:7-15, 18-19	607	Isa. 5:1-7	Phil. 4:4-9	Matt. 21:33-43
21st Sunday	Ps. 23	579	Isa. 25:6-10a	Phil. 4:12-20	Matt. 22:1-14
22nd Sunday	Ps. 96	595	Isa. 45:1-7	I Thess. 1:1-5	Matt. 22:15-22
23rd Sunday	Ps. 18:1-3, 46, 50	596	Exod. 22:21-27	I Thess. 1:2-10	Matt. 22:34-46
24th Sunday	Ps. 131	593	Mal. 1:14b-2:2b, 8-10	I Thess. 2:7-13	Matt. 23:1-12
25th Sunday	Ps. 63:1-7	589	Song of Sol. 3:1-5 ¹²	I Thess. 3:7-13	Matt. 24:1-14
26th Sunday	Ps. 128	613	Prov. 31:10-12, 20, 26-31	I Thess. 4:13-18	Matt. 25:1-13
27th Sunday	Ps. 105:1-7	564	Jer. 26:1-6	I Thess. 5:1-10	Matt. 25:14-15, 19-30
Last Sunday	Ps. 95:1-7	582	Ezek. 34:11-17	I Cor. 15:20-28	Matt. 25:31-46
All Saints'	Ps. 24:1-6	566	Isa. 26:1-4, 8-9, 12-13, 19-21	Rev. 7:9-17	Matt. 5:1-12

ADVENT: YEAR B (1978,1981,1984)

1st Sunday	Ps. 80:1-7	562	Isa. 63:16-64:8	I Cor. 1:3-9	Mark 13:32-37
2nd Sunday	Ps. 85	597	Isa. 40:1-11	II Pet. 3:8-14	Mark 1:1-8
3rd Sunday	Luke 1:46b-55	612	Isa. 61:1-4, 8-11	I Thess. 5:16-24	John 1:6-8, 19-28
4th Sunday	Ps. 89:1-4, 14-18	561	II Sam. 7:1-5, 7-16	Rom. 16:25-27	Luke 1:26-38

CHRISTMAS SEASON: YEAR B (1978/79,1981/82,1984/85)

Christmas	Ps. 98	585	Isa. 62:6-12	Titus 3:4-7	Luke 2:15-20
1st Sunday	Ps. 111	590	Jer. 31:10-13 ¹³	Heb. 2:10-18	Luke 2:22-40
2nd Sunday	Ps. 147:12-20	580	Isa. 61:10-62:3 ¹⁴	Rev. 21:22-22:2	John 1:1-18

EPIPHANY SEASON: YEAR B (1979,1982,1985)

Epiphany	Ps. 72:1-19	577	Isa. 60:1-6	Eph. 3:1-12	Matt. 2:1-12
1st Sunday	Ps. 29:1-4, 9-10	583	Isa. 42:1-7	Acts 10:34-38	Mark 1:4-11

EPIPHANY SEASON: YEAR B (cont'd.)

2nd Sunday	Ps. 67	568	I Sam. 3:1-10	I Cor. 6:12-20	John 1:35-42
3rd Sunday	Ps. 62:5-12	563	Jon. 3:1-5, 10	I Cor. 7:29-31	Mark 1:14-20
4th Sunday	Ps. 1	554	Deut. 18:15-22	I Cor. 7:32-35	Mark 1:21-28
5th Sunday	Ps. 147:1-12	599	Job 7:1-7	I Cor. 9:16-23	Mark 1:29-39
6th Sunday	Ps. 32	564	Lev. 13:1-2, 44-46	I Cor. 10:31-11:1	Mark 1:40-45
7th Sunday	Ps. 41	587	Isa. 43:15-25	II Cor. 1:18-22	Mark 2:1-12
8th Sunday	Ps. 103:1-13	573	Hos. 2:14-23	II Cor. 3:1b-6	Mark 2:18-22
Last Sunday	Ps. 50:1-6	584	II Kings 2:1-12a	II Cor. 4:3-6	Mark 9:2-9

LENT: YEAR B (1979,1982,1985)

Ash	Ps. 51:1-17	571	Joel 2:12-19	James 1:12-18	Mark 2:15-20
Wednesday					
1st Sunday	Ps. 25:3-9	581	Gen. 9:8-15	I Pet. 3:18-22	Mark 1:12-15
2nd Sunday	Ps. 115:1, 9-18	569	Gen. 28:10-17	Rom. 8:31-34	Mark 10:32-45
3rd Sunday	Ps. 19:7-14	558	Exod. 20:1-17	I Cor. 1:22-25	John 2:13-22
4th Sunday	Ps. 137:1-6	598	II Chron. 36:14-21	Eph. 2:1-10	John 3:14-21
5th Sunday	Ps. 51:10-16	615	Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 5:7-10	John 12:20-33
Palm Sunday	Ps. 22:7-8, 16-19, 22-23	559	Zech. 9:9-12	Phil. 2:5-11	Mark 14:1-15:47
Monday	Ps. 36:5-10	572	Isa. 42:1-9	Heb. 9:11-15	John 12:1-11
Tuesday	Ps. 71:1-12, 15, 17	567	Isa. 49:1-9a	I Cor. 3:1b-6	John 12:37-50
Wednesday	Ps. 70:1-2, 4-5	578	Isa. 50:4-9	Rom. 5:6-11	Matt. 26:14-25
Thursday	Ps. 116:12-19	591	Deut. 16:1-8	I Cor. 10:16-21	Mark 14:12-26
Good Friday	Ps. 31:1-5, 9-16	559	Lam. 1:7-12	Heb. 10:14-18	Luke 23:33-46

SEASON OF EASTER: YEAR B (1979,1982,1985)

Easter Eve	Same as Year A except for the final lection				Mark 16:1-8
Easter Day	Ps. 118:1-2, 14-24	592	Isa. 25:6-9	I Pet. 1:3-9	Mark 16:1-8
2nd Sunday	Ps. 148	605	Acts 4:32-37	I John 5:1-6	John 20:19-31
3rd Sunday	Ps. 139:1-12	600	Acts 3:13-15, 17-19	I John 2:1-6	Luke 24:35-49
4th Sunday	Ps. 23	560	Acts 4:5-12	I John 3:1-8	John 10:11-18
5th Sunday	Ps. 22:25-31	565	Acts 9:26-31	I John 3:18-24	John 15:1-8
6th Sunday	Ps. 98	576	Acts 11:5a, 11-18	I John 4:1-11	John 15:9-17
Ascension	Ps. 110	561	Acts 1:1-11	Eph. 1:16-23	Mark 16:15-20
7th Sunday	Ps. 47	561	Acts 1:15-26	I John 4:11-16	John 17:11-19
Pentecost	Ps. 104:1-4, 24-33	583	Joel 2:28-32	Acts 2:1-21	John 16:5-15

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST: YEAR B (1979, 1982, 1985)

1st Sunday	Ps. 149	555	Deut. 4:32-34, 39-40	Rom. 8:12-17	Matt. 28:16-20
2nd Sunday	Ps. 81:1-10	606	Deut. 5:12-15	II Cor. 4:7-11	Mark 2:23-3:6
3rd Sunday	Ps. 61:1-5, 8	570	Gen. 3:9-15	II Cor. 4:13-5:1	Mark 3:20-35
4th Sunday	Ps. 92	611	Ezek. 17:22-24	II Cor. 5:6-10	Mark 4:26-34
5th Sunday	Ps. 107:1-3, 23-32	574	Job 38:1-11, 16-18	II Cor. 5:14-17	Mark 4:35-41
6th Sunday	Ps. 30	557	Lam. 3:22-33 ¹⁵	II Cor. 8:1-9, 13-15	Mark 5:21-43
7th Sunday	Ps. 123	602	Ezek. 2:1-5	II Cor. 12:7-10	Mark 6:1-6
8th Sunday	Ps. 85:7-13	575	Amos 7:10-15	Eph. 1:3-14	Mark 6:7-13
9th Sunday	Ps. 23	556	Jer. 23:1-6	Eph. 2:13-22	Mark 6:30-44
10th Sunday	Ps. 145	594	II Kings 4:42-44	Eph. 4:1-6, 11-16	John 6:1-15
11th Sunday	Ps. 78:14-20, 23-29	572	Exod. 16:2-15	Eph. 4:17-25	John 6:24-35
12th Sunday	Ps. 34:1-8	566	I Kings 19:4-8	Eph. 4:30-5:2	John 6:41-52
13th Sunday	Ps. 34:9-14	567	Prov. 9:1-6	Eph. 5:15-20	John 6:51-59
14th Sunday	Ps. 34:15-22	578	Josh. 24:1-2a, 14-18	Eph. 5:21-33	John 6:60-69
15th Sunday	Ps. 15	586	Deut. 4:1-8	James 1:17-22, 26-27	Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23
16th Sunday	Ps. 146	604	Isa. 35:4-7a	James 2:1-5	Mark 7:31-37
17th Sunday	Ps. 116:1-9	588	Isa. 50:4-10	James 2:14-18	Mark 8:27-38
18th Sunday	Ps. 54	601	Jer. 11:18-20 ¹⁶	James 3:13-4:3	Mark 9:30-37
19th Sunday	Ps. 135:1-7, 13-14	603	Num. 11:24-30	James 5:1-6	Mark 9:38-50
20th Sunday	Ps. 128	607	Gen. 2:18-24	Heb. 2:9-13	Mark 10:2-16
21st Sunday	Ps. 90:1-8, 12-17	579	Prov. 3:13-20 ¹⁷	Heb. 3:1-6	Mark 10:17-30
22nd Sunday	Ps. 91:9-16	595	Isa. 53:10-12	Heb. 4:12-16	Mark 10:35-45
23rd Sunday	Ps. 126	596	Jer. 31:7-9	Heb. 4:2-10	Mark 10:46-52
24th Sunday	Ps. 119:1-16	593	Deut. 6:1-9	Heb. 7:23-28	Mark 12:28-34
25th Sunday	Ps. 107:1-3, 33-43	589	I Kings 17:8-16	Heb. 9:24-28	Mark 12:38-44
26th Sunday	Ps. 16	613	Dan. 12:1-4	Heb. 10:11-18	Mark 13:14-23
27th Sunday	Ps. 111	564	Dan. 7:9-10	Heb. 10:31-39	Mark 13:24-32
Last Sunday	Ps. 93	582	Dan. 7:13-14	Rev. 1:4b-8	John 18:33-37
All Saints'	Ps. 24:1-6	566	Rev. 7:2-4, 9-14	I John 3:1-3	Matt. 5:1-12

ADVENT: YEAR C (1976, 1979, 1982)

1st Sunday	Ps. 25:1-10	562	Jer. 33:14-16	I Thess. 3:9-4:2	Luke 21:25-36
2nd Sunday	Ps. 126	597	Isa. 9:2, 6-7 ¹⁸	Phil. 1:3-11	Luke 3:1-6
3rd Sunday	Isa. 12:2-6	612	Zeph. 3:14-18a	Phil. 4:4-9	Luke 3:7-18
4th Sunday	Ps. 80:1-7	561	Mic. 5:1-5a	Heb. 10:5-10	Luke 1:39-49

CHRISTMAS SEASON: YEAR C (1976/77, 1979/80, 1982/83)

Christmas	Ps. 97	585	Isa. 52:6-10	Heb. 1:1-9	John 1:1-18
1st Sunday	Ps. 111	590	Isa. 60:13-21 ¹⁹	Gal. 4:4-7	Luke 2:41-52
2nd Sunday	Ps. 147:12-20	580	Job 28:20-28 ²⁰	I Cor. 1:18-25	Luke 2:36-40

EPIPHANY SEASON: YEAR C (1977, 1980, 1983) 1986.

Epiphany	Ps. 72:1-19	577	Isa. 60:1-6	Eph. 3:1-12	Matt. 2:1-12
1st Sunday	Ps. 29:1-4, 9-10	583	Isa. 42:1-7	Acts 10:34-38	Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
2nd Sunday	Ps. 36:5-10	568	Isa. 62:1-5	I Cor. 12:3-11	John 2:1-12
3rd Sunday	Ps. 113	563	Neh. 8:1-4a, 5-6, 8-10	I Cor. 12:12-30	Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21
4th Sunday	Ps. 71:1-6, 15-17	554	Jer. 1:4-10	I Cor. 12:31-13:13	Luke 4:21-30
5th Sunday	Ps. 138	599	Isa. 6:1-8	I Cor. 15:1-11	Luke 5:1-11
6th Sunday	Ps. 1	564	Jer. 17:5-10	I Cor. 15:12-20	Luke 6:17-26
7th Sunday	Ps. 37:3-10	587	Gen. 45:3-8a, 15	I Cor. 15:35-38a, 42-50	Luke 6:27-38
8th Sunday	Ps. 92	573	Isa. 55:5, 10-13 ²¹	I Cor. 15:50-58	Luke 6:39-45
Last Sunday	Ps. 99:1-5	584	Isa. 34:1-12	II Cor. 3:12-4:2	Luke 9:28-36

LENT: YEAR C (1977, 1980, 1983) 1986, 1989

Ash	Ps. 51:1-17	571	Zech. 7:4-10	I Cor. 9:19-27	Luke 5:29-35
Wednesday	Ps. 91	581	Deut. 26:5-11	Rom. 10:8-13	Luke 4:1-13
1st Sunday	Ps. 27:7-18	569	Gen. 15:5-12, 17-18	Phil. 3:17-4:1	Luke 13:31-35
2nd Sunday	Ps. 103:1-11	558	Exod. 3:1-8b, 10-15	I Cor. 10:1-13	Luke 13:1-9
3rd Sunday	Ps. 34:1-8	598	Josh. 5:9-12	II Cor. 5:16-21	Luke 15:11-32
4th Sunday	Ps. 28:1-3, 6-9	615	Isa. 43:16-21	Phil. 3:8-14	John 8:1-11
5th Sunday	Ps. 31:1-5, 9-16	559	Deut. 32:36-39	Phil. 2:5-11	Luke 22:14-23:56
Palm Sunday	Ps. 36:5-10	572	Isa. 42:1-9	Heb. 9:11-15	John 12:1-11
Monday	Ps. 71:1-12, 15, 17	567	Isa. 49:1-9a	I Cor. 1:18-31	John 12:37-50
Tuesday	Ps. 70:1-2, 4-5	578	Isa. 50:4-9	Rom. 5:6-11	Matt. 26:14-25
Wednesday	Ps. 116:12-19	591	Num. 9:1-3, 11-12	Heb. 10:16-30	Luke 22:7-20
Thursday	Ps. 22:1-8, 19-31	559	Hos. 6:1-6	Heb. 9:15-22	Matt. 27:31-50
Good Friday					

State	County	Area (Acres)	Population	Value of Land (1900)	Value of Improvements (1900)	Total Value (1900)
Alabama	Adams	1,100	1,000	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$150,000
Alabama	Cherokee	1,200	1,100	\$120,000	\$60,000	\$180,000
Alabama	Chilton	1,300	1,200	\$130,000	\$70,000	\$200,000
Alabama	Clay	1,400	1,300	\$140,000	\$80,000	\$220,000
Alabama	Crawford	1,500	1,400	\$150,000	\$90,000	\$240,000
Alabama	Franklin	1,600	1,500	\$160,000	\$100,000	\$260,000
Alabama	Greene	1,700	1,600	\$170,000	\$110,000	\$280,000
Alabama	Jefferson	1,800	1,700	\$180,000	\$120,000	\$300,000
Alabama	Lamar	1,900	1,800	\$190,000	\$130,000	\$320,000
Alabama	Lawrence	2,000	1,900	\$200,000	\$140,000	\$340,000

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

State	County	Area (Acres)	Population	Value of Land (1900)	Value of Improvements (1900)	Total Value (1900)
Alabama	Madison	2,100	2,000	\$210,000	\$150,000	\$360,000
Alabama	Marshall	2,200	2,100	\$220,000	\$160,000	\$380,000
Alabama	Monroe	2,300	2,200	\$230,000	\$170,000	\$400,000
Alabama	Montgomery	2,400	2,300	\$240,000	\$180,000	\$420,000
Alabama	Opika	2,500	2,400	\$250,000	\$190,000	\$440,000
Alabama	Polk	2,600	2,500	\$260,000	\$200,000	\$460,000
Alabama	Quitman	2,700	2,600	\$270,000	\$210,000	\$480,000
Alabama	St. Clair	2,800	2,700	\$280,000	\$220,000	\$500,000
Alabama	Shelby	2,900	2,800	\$290,000	\$230,000	\$520,000
Alabama	Sumter	3,000	2,900	\$300,000	\$240,000	\$540,000

State	County	Area (Acres)	Population	Value of Land (1900)	Value of Improvements (1900)	Total Value (1900)
Alabama	Tallapoosa	3,100	3,000	\$310,000	\$250,000	\$560,000
Alabama	Telford	3,200	3,100	\$320,000	\$260,000	\$580,000
Alabama	Trotter	3,300	3,200	\$330,000	\$270,000	\$600,000
Alabama	Union	3,400	3,300	\$340,000	\$280,000	\$620,000
Alabama	Walker	3,500	3,400	\$350,000	\$290,000	\$640,000
Alabama	Washington	3,600	3,500	\$360,000	\$300,000	\$660,000
Alabama	Wilcox	3,700	3,600	\$370,000	\$310,000	\$680,000
Alabama	Yamhill	3,800	3,700	\$380,000	\$320,000	\$700,000
Alabama	Yavapai	3,900	3,800	\$390,000	\$330,000	\$720,000
Alabama	Yavapai	4,000	3,900	\$400,000	\$340,000	\$740,000

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

State	County	Area (Acres)	Population	Value of Land (1900)	Value of Improvements (1900)	Total Value (1900)
Alabama	Yavapai	4,100	4,000	\$410,000	\$350,000	\$760,000
Alabama	Yavapai	4,200	4,100	\$420,000	\$360,000	\$780,000
Alabama	Yavapai	4,300	4,200	\$430,000	\$370,000	\$800,000
Alabama	Yavapai	4,400	4,300	\$440,000	\$380,000	\$820,000
Alabama	Yavapai	4,500	4,400	\$450,000	\$390,000	\$840,000
Alabama	Yavapai	4,600	4,500	\$460,000	\$400,000	\$860,000
Alabama	Yavapai	4,700	4,600	\$470,000	\$410,000	\$880,000
Alabama	Yavapai	4,800	4,700	\$480,000	\$420,000	\$900,000
Alabama	Yavapai	4,900	4,800	\$490,000	\$430,000	\$920,000
Alabama	Yavapai	5,000	4,900	\$500,000	\$440,000	\$940,000

SEASON OF EASTER: YEAR C (1977, 1980, 1983)

Easter Eve	Same as Year A except for the final lection				Luke 24:1-12
Easter Day	Ps. 118:1-2, 14-24	592	Exod. 15:1-11	I Cor. 15:1-11	Luke 24:1-11
2nd Sunday	Ps. 149	605	Acts 5:12-16	Rev. 1:9-19	John 20:19-31
3rd Sunday	Ps. 30	600	Acts 5:27-42	Rev. 5:11-14	John 21:1-19
4th Sunday	Ps. 100	560	Acts 13:14, 43-52	Rev. 7:9-17	John 10:22-30
5th Sunday	Ps. 145:1-13	565	Acts 14:19-28	Rev. 21:1-5	John 13:31-35
6th Sunday	Ps. 67	576	Acts 15:1-6, 22-29	Rev. 21:10-14, 22-23	John 14:23-29
Ascension	Ps. 110	561	Acts 1:1-11	Eph. 1:16-23	Luke 24:44-53
7th Sunday	Ps. 47	561	Acts 7:55-60	Rev. 22:12-14, 16-17, 20	John 17:20-26
Pentecost	Ps. 104:1-4, 24-33	583	Gen. 11:1-9	Acts 2:1-21	John 15:26-27; 16:4b-11

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST: YEAR C (1977, 1980, 1983)

1st Sunday	Ps. 8	555	Prov. 8:22-31	Rom. 5:1-5	John 3:1-16
2nd Sunday	Ps. 117	606	I Kings 8:38-43	Gal. 1:1-10	Luke 7:1-10
3rd Sunday	Ps. 30	570	I Kings 17:17-24	Gal. 1:11-24	Luke 7:11-17
4th Sunday	Ps. 32	611	II Sam. 12:1-10, 13	Gal. 2:11-21	Luke 7:36-8:3
5th Sunday	Ps. 63:1-8	574	Zech. 12:7-10	Gal. 3:23-29	Luke 9:18-24
6th Sunday	Ps. 16	557	I Kings 19:14-21	Gal. 4:31-5:1, 13-18	Luke 9:51-62
7th Sunday	Ps. 66:1-12, 16-20	602	Isa. 66:10-14c	Gal. 6:11-18	Luke 10:1-12, 17-20
8th Sunday	Ps. 69:30, 32-36	575	Deut. 30:9-14	Col. 1:1-12	Luke 10:25-37
9th Sunday	Ps. 15	556	Gen. 18:1-11	Col. 1:21-28	Luke 10:38-42
10th Sunday	Ps. 138	594	Gen. 18:20-33	Col. 2:6-15	Luke 11:1-13
11th Sunday	Ps. 49:1-12	572	Ecccl. 1:2; 2:18-26	Col. 3:1-11	Luke 12:13-21
12th Sunday	Ps. 33	566	Gen. 15:1-6 ²²	Heb. 11:1-2, 8-19	Luke 12:32-48
13th Sunday	Ps. 82	567	Jer. 38:1b-13	Heb. 12:1-6	Luke 12:49-56
14th Sunday	Ps. 117	578	Isa. 66:18-23	Heb. 12:7-13	Luke 13:22-30
15th Sunday	Ps. 112	586	Prov. 25:6-22 ²³	Heb. 12:18-24	Luke 14:1, 7-14
16th Sunday	Ps. 10:12-14, 16-18	604	Prov. 9:8-12 ²⁴	Philem. 1-20	Luke 14:25-33
17th Sunday	Ps. 51:1-17	588	Exod. 32:7-14	I Tim. 1:12-17	Luke 15:1-10
18th Sunday	Ps. 113	601	Amos 8:4-8	I Tim. 2:1-8	Luke 16:1-13
19th Sunday	Ps. 146	603	Amos 6:1-7	I Tim. 6:11-16	Luke 16:19-31
20th Sunday	Ps. 95:1-7	607	Hab. 1:1-3; 2:1-4	II Tim. 1:3-14	Luke 17:1-10
21st Sunday	Ps. 98:1-4	579	II Kings 5:9-17	II Tim. 2:8-13	Luke 17:11-19

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST: YEAR C (cont'd.)

22nd Sunday	Ps. 121	595	Exod. 17:8-13	II Tim. 3:14-4:5	Luke 18:1-8
23rd Sunday	Ps. 34:1-2, 15-22	596	Deut. 10:12-22 ²⁵	II Tim. 4:6-8, 16-18	Luke 18:9-14
24th Sunday	Ps. 145	593	Zeph. 1:14-16 ²⁶	II Thess. 1:11-2:2	Luke 19:1-10
25th Sunday	Ps. 148	589	I Chron. 29:10-13 ²⁷	II Thess. 2:15-3:5	Luke 20:27-38
26th Sunday	Ps. 98:1-3	613	Mal. 3:16-4:2a	II Thess. 3:6-13	Luke 21:5-19
27th Sunday	Ps. 98:4-9	564	Mal. 3:1-5; 4:5-6	I Pet. 5:6-11	Luke 17:22-23
Last Sunday	Ps. 46	582	Job 23:1-7	Col. 1:12-20	Luke 23:35-43
All Saints'	Ps. 149	566	Isa. 26:1-4, 8-9, 12-13, 19-21	Rev. 21:9-11, 22-27	John 11:32-44

SPECIAL DAYS²⁸

New Year's Day or Watch Night	580	643	Eccl. 11:6-9; 12:13	Rev. 21:1-6a	Luke 9:57-62
Human Relations Day	573	633	Gen. 1:1-3, 26-31	Acts 10:9-15, 34	Mark 3:31-35
Festival of the Christian Home	588	658	Prov. 31:10-31	Eph. 5:25-6:4	Matt. 19:1-5, 10-14
Heritage Sunday	566	615	Isa. 52:1-2, 7-12	Rom. 5:1-11	Mark 12:28-34a
Independence Day	595	626	Deut. 1:5, 8-18	Gal. 5:13-15	John 8:31-36
Labor Day	555	624	Amos 5:11-15	Col. 3:23-25	John 6:5-14, 26-27
World Order Sunday	596	632	Mic. 4:1-5	James 4:1-12	Matt. 5:43-48
Reformation Day	570	654	Neh. 8:1-3, 5-8	Gal. 3:23-26	John 2:13-16
Drug and Alcohol Concerns Sunday	554	651	Isa. 5:11-12, 20-24	I Cor. 3:16-17	Luke 21:23-26
National Bible Sunday	593	621	Deut. 30:8-20	Rom. 15:4-13	Luke 4:16-21
Thanksgiving Day	575	607	Deut. 8:7-18	II Cor. 9:6-12	Luke 12:16-31

1st Kingdomtide
I Chron. 29:10-18
Rev. 1-7, 6-8
Matt 25:31-40

7312
I Chron 28:1-3
Matt 20:20-28
Eph 6:10-20

